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Ministry of Consolation.

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THE

MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION.

THE

MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION.

A Guide to Confession

FOR THE USE OF

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND.

"THEY THAT SOW IN TEARS SHALL REAP IN JOY."

LONDON:
JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,
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MDCCCLIV.

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TO

THOSE AMONG THE CLERGY OF THIS LAND

WHO FAITHFULLY EXECUTE

THE OFFICE OF THE PRIESTHOOD

IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION,

This Manual,

FOR THE USE OF THE FLOCKS COMMITTED TO THEIR CARE,

IS WITH DUE REVERENCE

INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

MORE than one able writer has already sufficiently proved this undoubted truth, that the use of the Holy Ordinance of Confession, as a living practical reality, is now and always has been, the true doctrine and intention of the Church in England.

This present work is not therefore written for the purpose of still further substantiating an indisputable fact, but the rather with a view to meet that want of some manual or guide to confession, which has been created by the very acknowledgment of this sacred ordinance, as a divinely ordained and necessary agent in the developement of the spiritual life.

There are two classes of persons for whom this volume is chiefly designed. First, for those who

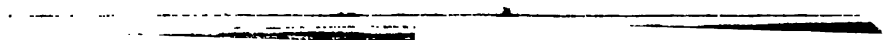
having admitted the reality of this blessed means of grace, and having felt deep within their own weary and heavy laden souls, the stern necessity for its purifying discipline, are yet, from the prejudices existing against it and the peculiar delicacy of the subject, unable to obtain through any oral teaching, the instruction necessary for its actual application to their own case. And secondly, for those, under whose notice the subject has never been brought at all, either in theory or practice, but who, struggling helpless and alone with the weight of unforgotten sins that clog them in their heavenward path, do truly feel within themselves a nameless want, a yearning vague and deep, for some unknown relief, which they are hopeless of obtaining, but which although they know it not lies even at their very door, in this the Ministry of Consolation.

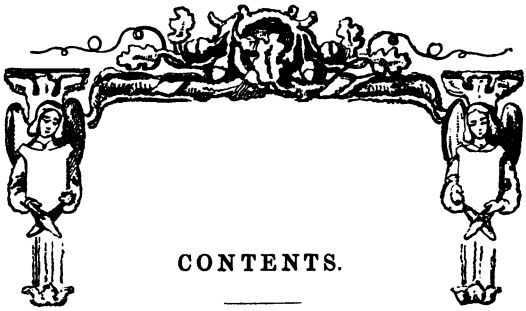
Yet whilst the primary object of this work, has thus been to provide a manual of practical utility for those who may be led, through the mercy of GOD, to seek rest unto their souls in this sacrament of peace, it has seemed good at the same time to give expression in the introductory chapters, and elsewhere, to the earnest conviction of the writer, respecting the truth of its Divine origin and purpose; for it is a sorrowful evil, which we may not seek to hide from ourselves, that there are

many who care not to consider whether or not the practice of confession be indeed enjoined by the Church in England, because they will not admit that the power of the keys does in any sense form a portion of catholic truth; and of persons thus minded, we cannot but hope that a clearer knowledge of the subject, might tend to the removal of their prejudices, and lead them to perceive that this solemn ordinance is indeed "of GOD." —As S. Paul declares when he says, speaking of himself and his fellowlabourers in the priesthood, "And all things are of GOD, who hath reconciled us to Himself by JESUS CHRIST, and *hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*"

May He our Great High Priest, through whom alone all sacerdotal acts can have their efficacy, of His great mercy grant to the communion of this land, soon to hold it as a recognized and precious faith, that this holy rite is not only in very deed and truth, an essential part of the organization of the Church of CHRIST, but also a most merciful provision of His watchful care, for the children of His Agony and Love.

Lent, MDCCCLIV.





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THE

MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Love of Christ in the Ministry of Consolation.

ARE there any living on this earth, who call upon the Name of CHRIST, and doubt HIS LOVE? That Love deepest of all the deep things of GOD, which none knoweth, or can know, save the Spirit of GOD alone. Surely to doubt it, were to die! Yea, if it be not all-perfect, all-wise, all-enduring, everlasting, then were it best that we should request for ourselves that we might die, like the Prophet of old, in his extremity, for in such a case we were not better than they the hopeless, who lie in the depths of the nethermost Hell, on whom this Love no more can shine, than

can the noon-day sun upon the dead decaying in the grave.

What could sustain us amid the sore temptations, the deep allurement, the bitter anguish of this world of ours,—save only the Love of CHRIST?

What but this could raise our vile nature, from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, and mould it by sacramental working to be one day, pure and blessed, in likeness of that Glorious Nature which dwelleth, Human, yet Sinless in the heavens! What save this alone, could uphold us sinking in the deep waters of death, when they who have loved us in our life, stand vainly weeping on the mortal shore, and cannot reach us forth one hand to aid! What else save this, shall quicken our dead ashes and make them tremble into life at His dear call, that after worms destroy our body, still in our living flesh we may see GOD! What else, preserve us in the Judgment terrors, or from the everlasting burnings, or through the dread eternity, that were but a despair unending bereft of Him, Who is alone the Light, the Joy, the Life thereof?

Surely, it is as though we uttered words of unwilling blasphemy, when we so much as dare surmise that any could doubt this Love, which is His very essence, yea, *Himself*, for GOD is Love—yet are we compelled, so to speak, because there are

many who do, unconsciously, and even whilst they shrink with terror, from the thought of such impiety, show forth, in word and deed, a virtual unbelief, either in the perfection of His wisdom or the perfection of His Love.—They know it not—and knowingly would rather perish haply, than so blaspheme the everlasting attribute of CHRIST our LORD, the very chiefest glory of the Virgin's Son. But Satan hath many wiles wherewith to make men traitors in their practice, who most are faithful in their thought, and there is one especially, one, of which we have now to speak, a snare hidden and subtle, which after this manner at the present time, the enemy hath set for our unwary feet. His object in this cruel deception which hath entangled many, is to make us count as an unholy thing one precious gift, a blessed means of certain pardon, which was well nigh the last proof of our LORD'S undying tenderness to man,—and we shall best show that it sprang from that deep Source indeed, and not from aught corrupt as the tempter would persuade us, by dwelling for a few minutes on the manner, in which His Love hath ever been made known to man.

GOD is Love, the word is truly spoken, and therefore His deathless sympathy, absolute and infinite, can never be augmented or diminished by aught in heaven or in earth. Such as it was be-

fore the worlds were, such is it now, and such shall it be, when the Breath that called this fair creation into being, shall dissolve it again, like vapour when the sun ariseth with its burning heat.

But for this very reason, because of the unchangeable perfection of this Love, it is to us incomprehensible, and even that faint portion of its ineffable beauty which mortal soul may compass, had been altogether beyond the grasp of our weak understanding and our weaker faith, had not He Who willed that we should know it to our endless joy, once given it expression in the form, which best could bring it home, in its deep intensity to the sorrowful heart of fallen man—for the shape in which He clothed it, to our dim comprehension, was even that of *agony*.

Yes, in agony human, and superhuman, comes the manifestation of the Love of CHRIST to us, and ours it is to trace it out in every step of that long dolorous way, which He trod homeless and wounded, ever suffering, from the first hour when He lay weeping on the Virgin breast, already pierced with sword prophetic for His sake, until the culminating moment of that awful death-cry on the Cross—the Cross which rent His human flesh, as His pure human heart had been already rent, by hate of those for whom He sorrowed unto death, and sorrowing died!

His agony is but as it were *the shadow of His Love*, which He the Sun of Righteousness hath cast upon the earth, that the mortal eyes which could not have endured the brightness of its unveiled glory, may look on it undazzled, thus tempered by the darkness of a mortal woe. Now although, as we have said, it can know neither lessening nor increase, yet as we read of it in the blood-stained record of His earthly sorrows, He hath willed that it should seem to us, as though it ever deepened with His anguish, deepening onward to the close.

Thus, wondrous as is indeed the Love made known to earth, in the first low wail that from the Holy Infant Lips, went forth to tell the erring race of men, that He, their Infinite Creator, had come from His glory-throne, begirt with power Omnipotent, to weep for them a suffering human Child, yet seems it not to us that it is still more wonderful, more touchingly profound when breathed, so to speak, into our souls, by that solemn utterance of His anguish, when He *sighed deeply in His Spirit* because being tempted of the unbelieving Pharisees, He foresaw all future unbelief and ruin,—and so ever strengthening with His strengthening tortures, does not the expression of His tenderness appear to fall upon our very hearts, in those pure tears of most intense com-

passion, which He shed at the grave of Lazarus, for all to whom death should bring anguish in this life and the next, because they would not break from sin, to rest in Him the Resurrection and the Life,—and so on, till the very earth quivered and rent its rocks, at the piercing accents of His great mystery of Love, when it burst forth in that Supreme wail of utter desolation, whose echo even yet is heard of every listening soul, haunting the world in ceaseless revelation, and telling how for our sakes He hung upon the accursed Tree,—a Man by GOD forsaken, and GOD by man deserted in His last extremity!

But still even here it ceased not! There is a later eloquence more deep and full than even that final groan of torture, which tells of the enduring Love in every act and word divine, through all His lingering, Risen and Triumphant, on this sinful earth, when already His glorified Body and Soul were thirsting to ascend the sinless heaven and sit on the Right Hand of the FATHER in His majesty and power,—for He so lingered, only that He might build up for us His Church within the world, to be our refuge sure and sweet, from all its wickedness and woe.

Now if these things be so, is it not certain, as His very truth itself, that the words which He the Dead Alive remained on earth to speak, must needs

be filled especially with His omniscient Love, and be indeed of import deep and solemn to our souls? and yet so wayward and unfaithful are we even now, that there are many of His followers at the present time, who do indeed presume to doubt the wisdom and the tenderness, of one most awful declaration, more than all others full of power and wondrous mercy, which He expressly waited on this earth to utter for their sakes! Yea, they do not even fear to cast out the words as evil in which He spake it, and to count as useless or pernicious, the provision which He made by it, for the peace of His poor sin-bound children, in all the generations past from that hour and yet to come.

Is it not so? brethren and sisters in Him Who is alone the Truth, we ask it of yourselves, Is it not so? For the declaration of which we speak, is that wherein the authority and power for the remission of sins, was given to the undying priesthood of the Church of CHRIST on earth; and hateful as the truth of your rebellion may seem unto yourselves when thus detailed in words, yet certain it is that to such a measure of faithlessness as we have described above, you are allured by the joint power of prejudice and of self-love, in all its rank deception.

But now we beseech you to cast aside for a little while, all preconceived ideas on this most solemn subject, draw back the blinding veil which popular

error and unconscious self-indulgence, have thrown around it, and listen one moment in obedience and unquestioning faith unto the VOICE, speaking in well-nigh its last accents on the earth, the Voice which you shall hear, with all that are in the graves, when He shall call you forth to the Resurrection of Life or to the resurrection of damnation,—and remember, in mercy to your own souls, ere you turn, as we entreat of you, to hear Him now, that He had declared already, before the solemn mandate of which we are about to speak had passed His sacred lips, that by His *words* we shall be judged, and by His words, if rejected and disowned, condemned!

Hear Him then, but let us first note with what an awful manifestation of the Godhead and its power, He ushered in the words to which we pray you now to listen, and gave to them a fearful efficacy and a fearful truth.

At the time when they were spoken, the birthday of the Church had not yet dawned, nor had the coming of the PARACLETE, to tabernacle in Her, been announced, by the flaming of the Pentecostal Fires on the heads of those, who were the first in the chain of that everlasting Priesthood which He established in His Body mystical, Who is a Priest for ever,—and yet preventing as it were, that day of glorious gifts, that by His own creative act He

might invest His Priests with the blessed power of representing Him in the one great ministry of reconciliation, He conveyed to them on that occasion, even by His own Almighty Breath, the HOLY GHOST in special gift, that when the heavens should receive Him, they might act in His stead Who had power on earth to forgive sins, and break the iron bars of guilt from off the souls of men.

"Then said JESUS to them again, Peace be unto you, *as My* FATHER *hath sent Me, even so send I you*, and when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the HOLY GHOST."

Once before this self-same action, was performed by Him who made the worlds, even this very LORD and CHRIST, and we know what followed then, from the entering of the breath of GOD into the form of dust and clay, "Man became a living soul."

This was the first result. When in the natural creation this omnipotent act was used, it gave nothing less than life, and will any dare to say, that when it was repeated in the spiritual creation, conveying GOD the HOLY GHOST Himself in special gift unto the priests of CHRIST, with special purpose to the souls whom they were set to watch, that the words of solemn institution which followed

this dread act, were meaningless and vague, availing nothing in the spiritual life, or in the prospects of the life eternal? Servants of CHRIST, is it no blasphemy to think, that the direct commission founded on that gift of power, was to mean virtually nothing, in the organization of that Church your LORD had purchased with His Blood —to be to men, an empty sound from the cradle to the grave, or worse, a very mockery! Hear these words, so awful and so blessed, which dispite the faithlessness of many, shall echo in accents of mercy at the judgment seat, when the heavens are departing as a burning scroll; "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained."

Was that declaration, we demand, which was spoken by Him who alone hath the words of eternal life, and rendered operative by the accompanying gift of the HOLY GHOST, designed to fall to the ground unheard? Was this last act of His love and power needless, or (may He forgive us) an *evil thing*, a mockery, as we have said before? Even to hazard such a supposition seems an act of blasphemy, and yet is it not too surely the faith in actual fact of many thousands, who are in communion with the Church Catholic and Apostolic in this land? We need not as we ask the question, linger to attest this certain truth which no

man can gainsay with even a show of reason, that whatsoever power and commission was in that hour of which we speak, bestowed upon the Apostles by their very LORD and GOD, is in like manner conveyed to every Christian priest throughout the world, by the consecrating hands of those whom He hath sent, even as the FATHER sent Himself, and to whose every sacerdotal act He gives a perfect power and efficacy by the operation of His own eternal priesthood in the heavens.

The solemn act and words of ordination require no human arguments to prove their power, nor will any cavilling, at their awful import, avail one moment, in the judgment day, to remove from any who have ever lived, the dread responsibility of their full weight and meaning as performed and uttered,—first by CHRIST arisen, and afterwards by His Church, so often as she hath said to any in Her sacred office, "Receive the HOLY GHOST for the work and office of a priest in the Church of GOD —now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained."

But to return to what we have maintained, that —of the LORD'S own words of unchangeable institution, and of the Godlike act which preceded them, men calling themselves by His name have made

an evil thing, or at best a useless and unmeaning form; we ask again, is it not so? Will any dare to say, that the conditional assurance of forgiveness, declared to all who are penitent and believing in the Church's daily worship is *all* that the LORD of life designed for His people's good, in that last proof of tender care? for how can the Priest actually remit or retain the unconfessed sins of which he knows nothing? or that the yet gentler prayer for mercy, pardon, and strength, offered on behalf of all who approach the Altar Sacrament fulfils the LORD'S design, or yet that the absolving words as given in the Visitation of the Sick sufficient indeed in themselves *if rightly used* do *then* fill up the measure of His purpose, when only said in haste beside a dying bed, where haply some departing soul indifferent or impenitent until that hour, whose deadened conscience cannot feel, nor palsied tongue confess, the sins that have gone before him unto judgment, yet clings with desperate hope, to the insane belief that absolution thus *without confession*, can send him purified unto his Judge!

Is it no mockery, we say again, to suppose that for such conditional purposes, such casual benefits as these, the power of the very GOD, Third Person in the glorious TRINITY, was given by especial word and act unto the Christian priesthood? Oh

members of the Church of CHRIST, children of His love and care, deceive not thus yourselves unto your hurt; be assured, even as it was said of old, that this "is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life! and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it," even that land of everlasting life, which we must pass the deep waters of death to gain. We would beseech you, by the very tears of CHRIST, delude not your own selves in this, for wherefore wept He over Jerusalem, but because she knew not, even as in this instance ye know not, the things that belonged unto her peace? In the days of her visitation she knew them not, and soon were they hidden from her eyes, and her house was left unto her desolate. Now is your day of visitation, and in pity to yourselves blind not *your* eyes to the truth, lest haply it be in like manner hidden from them, hidden with its deep blessing, turned to a curse because—rejected!

Lay not this miserable hope unto your souls, that because elsewhere Satan may have found means, through the corruption of men, to pervert this holy ordinance unto their injury, *you* are therefore excused from using it for your soul's health! as reasonably might you then abstain from the very blessed Sacrament of the LORD'S own Body and Blood, because to many, through

unworthy receiving, it is damnation, and that precisely *for lack of this very ordeal of confession.* The rather is there no holy thing which man hath not, alas, profaned, and if we must discard all sacred ordinances which have been abused by others, from holy Baptism to the Church's charitable prayers over Christian ashes, then truly were our whole faith vain and we were yet in our sins.

But oh, brethren in CHRIST, wherefore seek to break the very cisterns which hold for you the living water? Why struggle to escape from that which is in very truth your life—a part essential, absolutely essential in the living system, which He, unto Whom you were born in Baptism, hath established for the gradual transformation of your fallen nature into the likeness of His own glorious nature, and for your growth from that birth-hour onward till ye attain the measure of the perfect stature of CHRIST, that so ye who have borne the image of the earthly may in like manner bear the image of the heavenly.

In truth, this ordinance for the remission of sins is so positive an essential in the scheme of salvation, that we cannot but think its rejection does really proceed, from a misapprehension of the true nature of that super-human plan for our redemption.

If it be indeed true, and He who has taught u

this IS Truth, that we, the fallen, can only be restored to that Image in which we were first created, and to the blissful end and object of our being in eternal enjoyment of the Divine presence, by a living union with the sinless humanity of Him Who is our all-sufficient sacrifice, and if this union be commenced in Baptism, when we are born into the very life of CHRIST, endued by the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST with a new and spiritual existence as members of His Body and partakers of His nature, and if this existence, enduring if unobstructed unto life eternal, be yet liable through the malice of the enemy and the lingering power of the old man Adam, to decay, disease, and death, and for this cause must be nourished perpetually and kept alive by the Holy Sacrament, which is its food,—is it not self-evident that there must be some remedy also for the *diseases* to which it is prone? Members of His Body we are, and must remain, for in that Sacramental union we are made very bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh—but members palsied and dead we may be—weak and sickly we all are, more or less, and what shall it avail, that He hath given us life and food, if He give us not also medicine to heal our sickness? Life He hath given us in Holy Baptism, food in the blessed Altar Sacrament, but where is the medicine which He, the

good Physician, must needs have prepared for ou soul's better health, if not this purifying remed of absolution, which cleanses the sin that is ou foul disease, our clinging leprosy?

The analogy is perfect, between the spiritua life of the soul, and the natural existence of th body. We know how, oftentimes, the life receive in common birth, would decay under the insidiou working of many a physical disease, were ther no healing powers to stay the progress of th hidden evil, no painful remedy to cleanse the fes tering wound, no ready knife to cut away th mortifying flesh, or cooling draught to still th fever of the veins; how often the food required i health creates a very loathing and turns to ac tual poison through some corrupting malady; an even so, is it with the soul, as it travels from th cradle to the grave. In like manner, full ofte doth it fall sick from its inherent frailty, or fro outward circumstances that may work on it witl baneful power. There are temptations of the evi one, like sudden dangers, that might be avoide or might ruin—pernicious example like the fou airs that can blight unseen—sins festering in th conscience, evil habits deadening all pure im pulses, deceit spreading its fair bloom on the face while corruption preys upon the vitals—the pas sion fever raging in the heart; and the soul itsel

choked, with the heaped-up sins it hath not dared to rifle, and loathing its food, the Flesh and Blood of CHRIST, which, except a man do eat, he hath no life, or receiving it unto condemnation, because of inward putrefaction; and for all this, other remedy is there none, save that which CHRIST hath laid, even the remission of sins, on due repentance and confession, by the holy absolution, given on earth and sealed in heaven.

Will any dare to say his soul is in perfect health? untroubled by one touch of that corruption of unrighteousness, which is its ruin? Surely if it were so, it were fit at once to join the angelic hosts, as did Elijah in his flaming chariot, exempt from the dread Death-penalty, which is the wages of all sin. But if it be not so—if none would venture so to testify of themselves, howsoever much their heart may deceive them in its desperate wickedness—then how should we count them in the analogy of the physical disease, sick even unto *madness*, if when we bade them seek a remedy, they were to make answer unto us, speaking as were thus and saying,—"Yea it is true that we e not whole, that from the sole of our foot even our head, there is no soundness in us, but only unds and bruises and putrefying sores, which re not been closed, neither bound up, neither lified with ointment, and yet *we need* not a phy-

sician nor a remedy, albeit He the Chief Physici hath said, that the whole truly need not one, but th they do who are sick; we will not go and show ou selves and our diseases to the Priest whom He ha sent as He was sent Himself, to heal all manner sickness and bind up all our wounds—we can he ourselves without the gift of absolution given for th special purpose because it is His medicine of purif ing power—or else, forasmuch as He indeed very GOD, and His words may not fall altogeth unheeded to the ground in this world, seeing th shall endure eternally when heaven and earth ha passed away, this much will we grant, that E appointed Priests may use the remedy for t while we do carefully *conceal* from them the ev they would cure."

Oh, Brethren in CHRIST, if men spake thus, the diseases of their poor mortal body, that soon or later shall return unto the dust from whence sprung, should we not count their words the ra ings of insanity? and compel them for their ve life, to lay bare their diseased part and their hi den wounds to the physician's eye, that remedie applied with skilful hand, might check the ev and remove the cause, and salutary counsel guar them from a repetition of the follies, which ha haply caused their sickness, and guide them al how to keep themselves in future, lest being no

made whole, a worse thing come to them. And if we should so deal with them out of compassion to their mere earthly frame—how much more when they speak thus madly of the very immortal and regenerate soul, whose perishing, if it die, shall be in the everlasting hell!

But wherefore do we linger, to use arguments of human reason, when it is nothing less than the Deathless love of CHRIST Himself, that only Truth, that sole Perfection, which hath ordained this sacred ordinance for our eternal Blessedness?

Let us return to that of which we spake at first, His Love—the Love He poured out for us all His Life Long in His ceaseless agony, and gathered up in one bright consummation at the last, that He might breathe from it, as it were this Sacrament of Peace, in the solemn act whereby He conveyed the HOLY GHOST to His Apostles, and in so doing established (ere He departed to be our Intercessor in the heavens,) a medium sure and sacred whereby that Peace, the first gift promised at His Birth and the last bequeathed by Him to man, might rest on us and abide with us for ever.

That the Institution of this Holy Rite, must in truth have been an act of special tenderness and mercy, in Him who best knew our necessities, is, as we have said, sufficiently shown in the fact that it was well nigh the last proof, on earth, of His

ever ceaseless care—the last manifestation of that glorious Love which we have seen beaming out clearer and clearer, as the flames of the fire of tribulation through which it passed, waxed ever fiercer until at last, when even the many waters of death had failed to quench it, we see it rising from the very tomb—from beneath the crushing grave-stone, and the chill sepulchral damps, so bright, so ardent, and so glowing, that not even the glory-throne prepared for the Conqueror of death and sin, could win Him back to heaven, till He had embodied its sweet precious power in the unspeakable gift of absolution, for the comfort of those whom He so loved unto the end.

Doth not even reason itself teach us that this His latest gift, could in no wise have fallen short in value of those which had preceded it? already had He given us His life in righteousness, His death in sacrifice, Himself in the union of regeneration, His flesh and blood in food of everlasting life, and this must needs have been the crowning blessing of pure mercy, without which all the fair system of redemption had been incomplete.

He was departing to His FATHER and to our FATHER, to His GOD and to our GOD: but ere He ascended He looked once more, with His compassionate Eyes upon the earth, heaving beneath its weight of suffering humanity; even

once before He looked on it, from out the mansions of eternal light, where He abode from everlasting, when the aspect of its deep piteous misery drew Him down among its stones and thorns, to pour out His Life-blood upon it, and so to heal its deadly wound. He looked upon it now, as then, and even as then He saw that its mingled mass of sufferings, which had so many shapes to mortal eyes, had but one aspect unto Him, who knew all things from the beginning. He saw that the sole evil of this world was *sin*—sin interpenetrating every heart and every phasis of existence, ever breeding sorrow in innumerable forms.

What but sin had driven us out from the Everlasting Arms, where He desired to enfold us in the ineffable rest of perfect blessedness? gathered there, into the very bosom of His sheltering love and filled to overflowing with the one pure joy for which we were created, had we lacked anything, or been capable of suffering aught? There—no piercing of heart or hand by broken reed, no disappointment or contumely, no wasting of the life and energies on that which satisfieth not—there none of the myriad evils which beset our path, but only perfect bliss, pure and eternal, as the same Love which had created it. Therefore in truth the deadly power which alone can separate us from this joy in CHRIST, must be the one true

woe from whence all others spring, and so it is that the sting of life, even as of death itself, is only this accursed sin.

He saw this, He, the All-wise and All-loving, and therefore He came, by perfect sorrow, suffering, and righteousness, to conquer this abhorrent evil, and now that His labour for this purpose was complete, in stainless holiness and guileless anguish, He was about to pass into the heavens, there to commence His work as our High Priest, without which even His most sacred agony had been in vain; that work of Regeneration, and of the subsequent growth of the soul, thus born in Him through sacramental power, till it is restored, reconciled by His Death, and living in His Life, in wondrous union to the bosom of the Eternal FATHER. But He saw, that even as the first creation, when man was made in innocence, and for a perfect bliss designed, had been altogether marred by sin, so this new creation, fairer, nobler still, where the human beings, born in spiritual birth of the Second Adam unto life eternal, are made very sons of GOD and heirs of heaven, was in danger, by this same dark power, of being in like manner for ever ruined, and therefore the crowning gift of all His mercy was an antidote for this most deadly poison.

Sin after baptism, were surely the very destruc-

tion of the spiritual life, if there were no means of removing its foul stains from off the soul, whose new existence can only be in an unbroken union with the All-immaculate. What concord hath CHRIST with Belial, or light with darkness, and how can He abide in us, when many sins have made our hearts as it were, the cage of every foul and unclean birth, and how can we abide in Him clad in the leprous garment of defilement?

None will dare gainsay the necessity of repentance, and of the absolution of their FATHER in heaven, if ever on earth, this union is to continue with His Blessed SON; but there are many who say like those who of old cried out, "Physician, heal thyself," that this most needful penitence must be performed, in secrecy and silence, with no other witness than the heart, which is deceitful above all things, and that if men thus commune with themselves of their shortcomings, our GOD shall hear in heaven, His dwelling place, and when He hears He will forgive; and so doubtless He hath heard and forgiven and may hear again *all such as are deterred by any reason from using the means He hath appointed for their cleansing*, for we know that "He hath compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are *out of the way*," but what if He willeth not so to pardon those, who being set of His unspeakable Mercy within His Church, are

privileged to use the channels, which He hath therein especially ordained and sanctified for the remission of sins?

Men may say that GOD needeth not the agency of an earthly priesthood, to proclaim forgiveness to the penitent, and cry out against His anointed ones, saying, as of old, These men speak blasphemies; who can forgive sins, save GOD alone? but what shall it avail that they so reason with themselves, if GOD Himself hath said unto His Priests, "Whosesoever sins YE remit, they ARE remitted: whosesoever sins YE retain they ARE retained, and so hath committed unto their hands and theirs alone, the ministry of reconciliation? If He, Who truly hath alone the power to forgive sins, hath willed, *after this fashion*, to forgive them, what are we that we should strive against GOD, as clay against the potter, and seek to substitute our ways for His ways, our will for His will? Shall mortal man be more just than GOD, shall a man be more pure than his Maker?

Is it not a fearful thing to think that haply *thus* we pierce afresh the SON of GOD, and reopen wide His wounds, by turning from the sources of Life which He hath provided, to seek out streams in the barren and dry land where no water is,—from the Jordan which He hath blessed for our especial cleansing, to the Abana and Pharpar of our own

choosing, where we vainly think that we may wash us and be clean?

Brethren in CHRIST, it may be that the words which we have spoken have found no echo in your hearts, though wrung from us by the very burning desire, that you might come to know this ministry of consolation to be indeed essential to your everlasting welfare, ere you pass into that grave, where there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom. It may be that to you they have only been as the voice of one that speaketh foolishness, for we know well, how full of contradiction and bewilderment is still this world, wherein the CHRIST (so oft unto this day rejected) can be the only Light. That which to one man is a stumbling block, to another is the very truth of GOD,—on all sides are teachers pointing to different paths and saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, we are they that ought to speak." And Satan's masterpiece for our destruction hath ever been, to make men sin against the HOLY GHOST, by counting the operations of that Blessed Spirit, to be his work who is the father of lies.

It was so when he taught the Jews to say, "This Man casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," and since then many a time hath he turned men out of the way of the Cross, by making it seem to them as the path that leadeth to

destruction. So against this blessed ordinance of which we speak, full many a specious argument is urged, and whilst we count it the power of GOD unto salvation, there are who rail against it as an evil thing,—but amidst all this sore disunion, this sad perplexity of many weak though faithful souls, these doubts, and errors, and the universal variance which makes the stoutest hearts among us faint at times and ready to cry out, "What is truth?" there is *one thing* which standeth firm and sure, having the very seal of the LORD, one unquestionable and tremendous truth which none may gainsay or resist, and that is THE COMING JUDGMENT. Now the manner of this Judgment we know, "He that receiveth not My words hath One that judgeth him—the word that I have spoken—the same shall judge him in the last day."

The Word that He hath spoken!—not our own conviction, however honest, as to what we deem beneficial to our souls, not our terrors however weighty, that the discipline enjoined will be for our perdition, not the undoubted fact that men have wrested it before to their destruction, nor the arguments used against it by teachers, who are holy and earnest, but *the Word that He hath spoken*. And, brethren, He HATH uttered the solemn declaration already so often quoted, whereby the power of the remission of sins is ordained in

the hands of the priesthood, and no other channel whatsoever is appointed for our *assured* forgiveness.

He hath said it, these are His words, and when by them, and them alone, so far as this matter is concerned, we are tried at the last day, what shall it avail us, that ten thousand times ten thousand teachers, had in the time past of our life forewarned us against it as an evil thing, or that millions had corrupted this holy ordinance unto their ruin? Yea, though never once it had appeared unto our mortal eyes productive of good, but only of evil continually, still His word hath commanded it, and by our obedience to that word we stand or fall.

Now though it is certain that a faith and obedience as blind and trusting as this which we have now described, shall alone avail us in that day, yet so far as regards this merciful ordinance of confession and absolution, He hath not put our weakness to so strong a test; for the rather is it indeed a blessing so deep and wonderful, that men could never fail to recognize it such, but for the veil of self-deceit that is on our hearts, through which the Light of GOD'S own Truth comes dim and troubled, and which this very ordinance alone perhaps, could tear from us in this life, although in the Judgment scrutiny, it

shall be dissolved like vapour, and then—Oh, let us look to it now, lest in that hour we find that we did indeed deceive ourselves, when we believed our war against this Holy Institution, was only because we doubted its divine origin or blessed results, whilst in actual truth it was, because its stern discipline is above all things repugnant to our fallen nature.

Yes! bitter indeed unto the natural man is the deep humiliation, the crucifixion of ourselves which it involves, and the whole soul shrinks involuntarily from so fiery an ordeal—and so it comes to pass, that many who do in all sincerity desire to bear the Cross and follow CHRIST, yet will not own unto themselves the true secret of their antagonism to this Rite, but clothe it to the eyes of others and their own, in a fair cloke of reason and expediency, which makes almost a merit of their sore defection.

So it is now—but after death the Judgment! and may He grant unto us in that day, that we need not to weep tears of blood for having rejected the one purifying channel, whereby the LORD of all compassion, hath willed to restore us fallen and penitent unto the heaven of His Love.

One word more we must say ere we close this portion of our subject.

The most wonderful and blessed sight, that

ever on this earth was seen, was surely in that hour when the holy S. John, a human being like ourselves, was laid in rest ineffable on the breast of the Incarnate GOD,—and blessed indeed it is for us to feel and know that this was but the type of that alone joy, and all-perfect bliss which He died to purchase for the race of men, that only happiness which can satisfy the never dying soul, even a repose eternal on His unfailing Love, yea *in* His very sacred Heart where we may nestle safe and blest for ever, and to which an entrance hath been ministered for us abundantly, by the piercing of the cruel spear.

This is our rest for ever—this our everlasting joy, and the means whereby on earth we may in a true sense, enter into that deep holy Heart, when already born in Him, is amply given in that glorious Sacrament, whereby we dwell in Him and He in us. But even as a sword of fire defended man's first Eden from the guilty Adam, so is this far sweeter Paradise guarded from the intrusion of aught that defileth, and from any evil thing, by that ordeal of confession which is so fiery indeed, and which pierceth the sinful soul like a sharp two-edged sword,—yet merciful truly that it doth so guard it, when we think of the awful answer given to those, who in the last day shall plead with their LORD, saying, "LORD, we have *eaten and drunk in*

Thy presence," and to whom He shall say, "I know you not, depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you." Sacramentally, but unprepared and unpurified, they had eaten and drunk, when His very Presence was in the holy elements, and behold this was their doom!

Who, oh who, if they but thought on these things, would dare thus to seek a refuge in the spotless bosom of that Holy One, when from their self-accusing lips the cry must come, "unclean, unclean," and no messenger of CHRIST hath touched them to take away the iniquity, and purge the sin? Who would not undergo, if need were, the very tortures which the martyrs bore, to be made meet for such a home!

But rather does it not seem the worst ingratitude, to dwell so shrinkingly upon the pain and sorrow of confession, and give with it so little thought, unto the unutterable blessedness of absolution?

The forgiveness of our sins, is this no treasure worth the seeking, though we passed through fiery flames to win it? Oh, if there be aught on earth which has the power to image forth to us a faint reflection of the heaven itself, it is the joy, the rest, the sweetness inexpressible of absolution, and of the first communion which follows its dear pardon. Truly of this most holy ordinance above

all things it may be said, that if, in the sadness of confession it seems to us, that GOD in a little wrath doth hide His face from us for a moment, yet in the absolving words we learn indeed, how with everlasting kindness He will have mercy upon us.

And now whilst we proceed to help, so far as in us lies, those who labouring and weary in their struggle with the load of sin, are pining for this Sacrament of Peace, it seems as if there were no more we could say, to beseech those who would still reject it to have mercy on themselves. We have but recalled the LORD'S own words to them, and if they hear not CHRIST and His Apostles, they will not hear though one spake to them from the dead.

Yet doth it rest with us, as with all who pray for the peace of Jerusalem, to supplicate for these our brethren and companions' sake, that He Who instituted this sacred ordinance for their everlasting welfare, may so draw them to its salutary discipline with cords of Love, that ere the day when GOD shall bring every secret thing to judgment, and they shall be called in question for this matter, they may have learned in glad experience, how blessed above all things is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.

CHAPTER II.

Of the True Nature of Confession and Absolution.

"My sins have taken such hold upon me, that I am not able to look up; yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me." Are not these words even as the living voice of many a fainting soul, heavy and disquieted indeed? the exceeding bitter cry which echoes deep within them, unheard by all save One, Who, foreknowing their necessity, hath given the answer ere they felt the need. How many are there whose feet stumble on the dark mountains, because none have eased their shoulder from the burden, of past guilty years, when now, by suffering won or by the love of CHRIST constrained, they are indeed desiring to walk within the narrow pathway of the Cross. How many once careless, haply, but now pining to be up and doing for the

LORD of their life and hope, yet sit in darkness and the shadow of death, being fast bound in misery and iron, because the chain of their former sins, their evil habits, is riveted upon them, and they know not that He hath given power to His Church, to smite the bars of iron in pieces, and break their bonds in sunder. How many long to serve Him in newness of life,—to repent and cast away from them all their transgressions, to make them a new heart and a new spirit, that they may not die but live, who yet feel as if it were in vain, to build up now a holy life upon the mass of past defilement, which they know not if He will forgive! and there are others again, who, striving in sincerity to redeem the time, and counted by men to be of those that fear the LORD, still walk on heavily and in trembling, shuddering to think that haply, *that* woe is upon them which He pronounced against those of whom all men speak well, because the old unforgotten sins lie thick upon their conscience, like dead men's bones within the whited sepulchre, and they seem unto themselves as very hypocrites.

And now to all such as these, it is sweet indeed to talk of the true nature of that confession and absolution, whereby they may lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset them, and run the way of GOD'S commandments, not halting and

period at which it is used, is immediately before confirmation, and well were it for the Church of CHRIST, if none ever came to that supreme moment of their lives, a *first communion*, without this holy purifying rite.

But for these reasons, a first confession must, in most cases, comprise a large portion of the life, and thus the labour and difficulty of recalling all the sins therein contained, might well at first sight appal the penitent, who feels them to be indeed according to the words we quoted, innumerable as the hairs of his head. We would, therefore, at the very outset, state that which is indeed a fact, claiming our solemn and deliberate belief, as the experience of every penitent can testify, that a most peculiar and special assistance in remembering our sins, is, under these circumstances, given expressly for the purpose by that Omnipotent SPIRIT, Who calleth all things to our remembrance. Of this we shall speak hereafter, when treating of the actual preparation, but it seemed well thus briefly at the very commencement, to forestall a difficulty, which, were it real, might render abortive all efforts to give assistance in the great and blessed work of penitence.

We have said then, that confession must be distinct, unshrinking, and complete. It is a great and perilous error to suppose, as it is to be feared

too many do, that a *partial* confession can avail for the due reception of absolution, and the restoration of the spiritual life from its decay—the strengthening of those things which remain and are ready to die. The absolution is unlimited, for the Priest saith, "By the authority committed unto me, *I absolve thee from* ALL *thy sins*," and who would not count it a frightful mockery to say in the face of this unconditional pardon;—"Nay, but I will not, that all my sins should be forgiven; only such and such as weigh upon my conscience will I tell, and seek for them remission, the rest I will retain and go with them unto the Altar of my spotless GOD."

Doubtless there are sins greater and less—but is there any sin, which is not abhorrent unto GOD, or which doth not impair our union with the all-pure sinless CHRIST? GOD limiteth not His forgiveness, and shall we limit our repentance? Our Church moreover, howsoever men may mistake her meaning, does indeed enjoin the absolute completeness and unreservedness of our confession; for in that exhortation in which she summons her children, even in full health of body, to have recourse unto this holy remedy for the sickness of their soul, ere they receive the heavenly food of their regenerate life, she commands them to examine their lives and conversations by the

rule of GOD'S commandments, that they may discern whereinsoever they have offended, either by *will, word, or deed;* and if as she knew must often be the case with those who are really in earnest, they cannot by their own efforts quiet their conscience herein, she then desireth them to go unto their pastor and open their griefs to him, that by his ministry they may receive absolution, with the benefit of ghostly counsel and advice.

In truth, it were utterly impossible, for the Priest to give Absolution, unless he had a perfect knowledge of all the sins that burden the conscience of the penitent. It were simply an unreal mockery to say, "I absolve thee from ALL thy sins," when he knows not whether they be such as can be absolved, or whether the penitence of the sinner be such as to render the Absolution indeed efficacious. The fact, that there is at least *one* sin which hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, neither in that which is to come, renders it absolutely essential, that the Priest should be in a condition to know of a surety, that he is not involuntarily taking the name of GOD in vain, by pronouncing in CHRIST'S stead the pardon of some iniquity which that same LORD hath willed never to pardon—thus declaring "Peace, peace, where there is no peace!"

Power is given unto the Priest not only to remit but to retain—to bind as well as to loose—and he may not dare to exercise the absolving portion of this two-fold authority, without possessing an absolute certainty, that there is nought in the penitent's condition, to compel him to use that other and more awful function.

In fact, the very object of absolution renders it imperative that it should reach to *every* stain which may be on the soul; for the one purpose and end of this merciful provision, is to reconcile that soul which hath sinned to CHRIST, to restore it to its baptismal union with Him, from Whom it has fallen by unrighteousness; now if sin in any kind or degree, does more or less impair this union, it is self-evident, that it is no true reconciliation which would seek to restore the soul to CHRIST, half purged only and not clean every whit.

We have laid much stress on this dangerous mistake, because there are many persons who have founded a theory in favour of partial confession, on those words of the Church, (wholly misunderstood by them), in which she commands that the sick person shall be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience to be burdened with any weighty matter. We might cut the argument short at once, on this point, by

simply stating the incontrovertible fact, well known to the Church in her prescience, that in face of the judgment whether on a deathbed, or in that earlier and better preparation for it which may be made in life, there is NO sin, great or small, which is not a "weighty matter," yea, an awful matter, bearing nothing less than the weight of eternity upon it; for if the Judge of the whole earth, were to see fit to leave but one sin unforgiven at the last, where would the sinner be, throughout the eternal ages? But leaving this unanswerable truth aside, the words of Holy Church which we have quoted, will not bear the construction which persons would thus place on them; they may if they will wring from them the admission, that if any person does not consider his sins a sufficiently weighty matter to require a certain forgiveness, he is at liberty to abstain from seeking the assurance of their pardon in absolution; but she commands in the first instance that the Priest move the sick person to make a special confession of his "*sins*," not of any weighty matter alone, which may particularly weigh upon the conscience, but of his "sins" in their full complement as they stand in the sight of GOD.

Again the deep salutary power, which the discipline of confesson has on the progress of the spiritual life (so great a power, that those who have

seen its effect may well doubt if there can be an *very* great advancement without it) is entirely net tralized by the confession being partial. This is benefit wholly distinct from the one great blessin of absolution, and is founded on that wonderfu revelation of the soul to *herself*, which is effected b this solemn scrutiny—for the blessed ordinance o reconciliation contains not only the pardon of pas sins, but a safeguard against the time to come It is at once prevention and cure.

Now it is not the sins potent and palpable, press ing heavily on the conscience, such as person would probably call a weighty matter, which woul be likely to prove the great stumbling block in th onward course of the penitent. It is chiefly thos which his deceitful heart has been cherishing i ignorance of their existence, or of which he is ob livious, till the necessity of sifting every principl of action, every secret depth of thought bring them all to light.

Of such are vanity, selfishness, pride, self-seek ing, self-consciousness, desire of human praise idolatrous affections, doing all unto the eyes o men, untruthfulness, spiritual complacency, envy jealousy, the humility which is vain-glorious, th ill health which is indolence, the secret dislike o others, the distaste for devotion, and that which hatl a share in all the rest, the subtle damning self-de

ceit. Oh! with what pure motives we believe we act, how immaculate seem our intentions and our course of life, how singleminded our endeavours for the glory of our GOD, or the good of others, how virtuously we hold ourselves of no account: how righteously we indulge ourselves, lest strict adherence to the Church's laws, give cause for scandal: how clearly our cowardice is expediency, our avoidance of discipline care for the weaker souls who might be startled by our example, our evil speaking hate of sin, and many more apparent virtues but the mask of vices, till in confession we are made known unto ourselves—and the HOLY GHOST especially invoked and given, drags out the secret thoughts, the real motives, the myriad subterfuges of self-love, to be as a very cloud of witnesses against us.

These are not the sins, deadly and blighting as they are, which would ever be revealed in a partial confession, and yet these are they, far more than glaring misdeeds which clog the heavenward path, and are, so to speak, the mildew of the soul, blighting its healthy growth. It is for these above all that "ghostly counsel and advice," the remedy specially prescribed by the Church for our spiritual weakness, is most essential: but this benefit, salutary and blessed as it is, can never be either given or received unless the *whole* condition of the soul be revealed to the spiritual physician, even as we

may not look to have the diseases of our body cured, without detailing the symptoms or the cause; and we all know how necessary it is when the healing medicines to which GOD hath given virtue have done their work, that he whose office it is to heal the sick in body, should add such admonitions for the future, as may guard them from a repetition of their sufferings and keep them in a sound and healthy frame.

So in the spiritual and better life, except free scope is given to the pastoral working of those, whose appointed labour it is to strive according to the working of Him, Who worketh in them mightily, to present every man perfect in CHRIST JESUS, that gracious promise is rendered altogether vain, which assureth unto us wandering in a twilight world, this deep sweet consolation, that although the LORD should give us here the bread of adversity and waters of affliction, still to each one He saith, "Thine eye shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying: this is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand or to the left.

It is strange, that they who would limit the privilege of confession in the English Church to partial revelations, are precisely those who dread, that too great power be accorded to the priesthood, and yet by this very system, which allows

the penitent to confess only that which he may deem a weighty matter, they do in fact award to the representative of CHRIST, a far higher power than others would dare to do, who believe in the necessity of a full confession. For whether is it easier for the Priest to pronounce on all such as are penitent, the absolution and remission of their offences, in CHRIST'S stead, or of his own will and authority, to absolve them from all their sins without inquiring of them, or so much as heeding, that one condition which the LORD hath absolutely demanded, of a perfect penitence?

What possible proof is there that the sinner is in any sort penitent, if he doth not confess or desire pardon? What proof that they so much as know of those sins, those secret faults from which they must needs be cleansed if they would ever see the LORD? The rather is it not absolutely a proof that they are not penitent, or else in ignorance of hidden evil, as men may be of the disease, that is about to slay them, if they will not avow their fault and seek not, nor desire pardon?

What art thou, oh man! that judgest another be worthy of forgiveness, without one token of it repentance, which, except he have, our GOD h said he can have no remission? how knowest , but that in pronouncing absolution after a ession, garbled and distorted, thou mayest not

unwittingly deceive the sinner, like him, who, of old, asserted to the woman, "Ye shall not surely die!"

But it is enough without further argument, that the very LORD'S own words whereby He instituted this Divine ordinance, admit of no partial revelation of the sins to which He, of His endless pity, hath promised forgiveness. He saith not, "*Whatsoever* sin ye remit, it is remitted," but "WHOSESOEVER SINS ye remit they are remitted," and He, Who knew what was in man, a Discerner indeed of the thoughts and intents of the heart, needed not to be told, that if ever any so felt the weight and burden of sin, and its miserable power in separating the soul from Him, their only Life, as to seek for pardon in this blessed Rite; they could never rest, till every shadow of a stain was delivered up to that pure influence, to be for ever blotted out, and themselves restored, all white and clean, unto the very arms of their sinless LORD.

Yes, truly! all that we have said of the danger of this miserable fallacy of a partial confession can, we are persuaded, only apply to those (numberless, alas!) who never themselves have sought this ministry of consolation, in any form whatsoever, but who, legislating for others, would seek to stint for them, at once, the measure of its sacramental peace, and their most needful peni-

tence; for it seems impossible, that any who have ever pined and yearned after Him, the only pure, the only all-sufficient love of the Immortal Soul, and felt that their sins were as a thick cloud hiding Him from their adoring gaze, and from the clinging grasp of their weak arms, should ever be content, with aught but fullest pardon, and the fullest renunciation of the abhorred ills, that come between them and their LORD and Life.

Oh! who that hath been bound in Satan's chains full many years, and panteth now with weary longing for the free air, the freshening dews of heaven, the sunshine of the Master's Love, the pure life which is perfect freedom, and seeth already the merciful hands, outstretched to loose his bonds, in name of Him who led captivity captive—who thus bound, and thus with perfect liberty at hand, would yet cry out that he will not have a full release, a perfect loosening of his chains—a little shall his bonds be slackened but not altogether—a little freedom to his limbs be given, but still a shackled prisoner, will he seek to scale the steep ascent of heaven instead of running on that upward path, the way of GOD'S commandments, with winged feet, because CHRIST hath set his heart at liberty?

Who, that hath tasted the ineffable joy of absolution, sweeter to the soul than ever cooling

water from the freshest streams had been to Dives in his burning torments, could ever more refrain from draining its deep cup of comfort, even to the latest dregs!

"Not my feet only, but my hands and my head;" so cries the soul at such an hour, in her boundless gratitude, her wondering extasy, at the greatness of her pardon so far beyond what she hath ever looked for! LORD, if Thou wash us not, we are not clean. Thine own blest words have said it; but oh, not they who, flung in penitence beneath Thy feet, have ever seen Thee rise and gird Thyself in person of Thy Priest, to wash them from their sins, would stay Thy hand in that its work of mercy, ere they be clean every whit—rather creeping nearer and nearer unto Thee the Fount of Pity—would they yield up their whole being to the purifying flood, till not one stain remained to mar Thine Image in their souls!

In treating of the true nature of confession, it behoves us carefully to point out all such elements as are absolutely essential for its acceptance with GOD, and the efficacy of the absolution which follows it, even although in so doing, we seem rather to speak of the danger that must attend the abuse of this sacred ordinance, than of the deep blessedness which is its sure reward if rightly used.

Like all other good gifts, which have come to us from the FATHER of Lights, it has certain conditions annexed to it, failing which, we run the risk of turning this wondrous Blessing into a very curse, even as the unworthy receiving of the LORD'S Body and Blood, is to eat and drink unto ourselves damnation.

These conditions are virtually the same as those required for the due reception of the two great Sacraments, only with a peculiar developement for the exigencies of this special rite.

Penitence, faith, and truth: these are the requirements, without which it were worse than void, and which must be possessed by the penitent, not in any vague or general sense, but with a fixed reference to the distinctive properties of this pardoning ordinance. Of these three conditions we shall now treat separately.

Of penitence first it may be said, that the very fact of confession, is the strongest proof that can be given of its real existence in the soul, and this is undoubtedly true, showing therein the vast superiority of the voluntary confession practised in our Communion, to the compulsory system elsewhere enforced. Indeed, so palpably true is this primary fact, that were repentance *only contrition* we should need no further test. But real penitence is something more than sorrow for sins,

it is also amendment and restitution, and the soul must strive to have, so far as may be, an absolute certainty that, by GOD'S grace, it does possess this three-fold penitence, ere it can reasonably hope for the full blessing of absolution.

In order therefore to assure the conscience on this point, there must be for the penitent an established law, that every sin which he confesses at the tribunal of penitence, must be for ever renounced, and that by the confession and seal of absolution, he binds himself never again by GOD'S help, wilfully to commit any one of them. Now, this will doubtless seem a hard saying even to the most penitent, considering that it is nothing less than the sins of a lifetime which are so confessed, and they will be ready to cry out with the men of little faith, "Who is sufficient for these things, or who then can be saved?" Nay,—but to that we answer, Who is it that hath said, "Be ye therefore perfect even as My FATHER in Heaven is perfect." No other standard doth He place before us than that of absolute perfection, and yet He Who so calls upon us, thus to attempt nothing less than an ascent into the very heaven itself, thence to bring down CHRIST, that He may be full formed in the heart,—is the same Who said unto the thief on the Cross, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

Herein is indeed the height and the depth of His Love. He will not have us seek aught less blessed and glorious for ourselves than a perfect union with Him, and yet, forasmuch as we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but knoweth all our poverty and nakedness, whensoever He seeth us fall, and sink in the deep waters of temptation ready to perish, then is He ever most willing, to turn from His Cross and help us, and win us back to Paradise.

We say, and we cannot abate one iota of this requirement, that the true penitent must in all good faith resolve most solemnly, to avoid the recurrence in his future life, of every single sin which he confesses,—but we do not say that he will be able to do so, for, alas, well do we know that the cry of each awakened conscience, will ever be like that of one, a father in our Israel and well beloved,[1] who himself used the ordinance of confession up to the day of his death, and who was wont thus to exclaim:—

"LORD,
As we add day to day,
So sin to sin,
The just falleth seven times a day,
And I an exceeding sinner
Seventy times seven!"

[1] Bishop Andrewes.

Neither do we say that by thus failing *not wilfully*, but through infirmity, he will diminish aught of the completeness of his pardon for the past. No! praised be GOD, that Fountain once opened for sin is never closed. Still is there balm in Gilead, though he hath opened afresh the corrupting sores which the Blood of CHRIST had healed, and even as the child once pardoned, but erring all too soon again, falls at his father's knee, sure of forgiveness tempered with reproof, so may he come again and again to bewail his renewed shortcomings, and to hear ever the sweet pitying answer, "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds;" and then the blessed consummation "Go yet again in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee, sin no more."

Truly may we say of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in this holy ordinance, that He hath made His officers peace, and His exactors righteousness, and they who treat of it may well cry out, that their song is of mercy and of judgment, for whilst He doth so specially show forth in it the indulgence of His everlasting Love, His never wearying pardon until seventy times seven,—He yet compels the soul as it were by the very sweetness of His mercy to ascend unto heights of spiritual perfection, to which nought else could ever have allured it, even *in desire.*

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ial pardon for sins which they had not re-
nced, but were the rather predetermined to
mit again! This were a sin against the light
truth, which none sufficiently sincere and in
iest to come to confession at all, would ever
into—and herein precisely lies the secret of
wonderful advancement in the spiritual life,
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he soul new born in Holy Baptism is set within
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il her,—Satan doth wound,—sin doth stain
—and the glorious likeness of the Sinless One

is marred and broken within her, as the image of the Sun shining into the once clear pool is shattered and clouded, if stones, and mud, and foul impurity choked up its yielding waters. Then in her abhorrence of her stains, her longing to be pure once more, she betakes herself unto this Sacrament of Pardon, and through its keen uncompromising scrutiny, her real defection is revealed unto herself in depths of hideousness, far greater than she could have even dreamt of, till the veil in which she was self-clothed unconsciously, is thus stripped from her,—then she confesses all, self-judging, self-condemned, and straightway falls the flood of mercy round her, bathing her in that rich purifying stream, which from her LORD'S own Heart is drawn for her necessity; the sweet absolving words are uttered, dearer than tenderest accents from a voice beloved, and she feels that her leprosy is departed from her, and her flesh is come to her again as the flesh of a little child, for she is restored in GOD'S sight to her baptismal purity, with but the recollection of the foul stains cleansed, to make her shrink from their recurrence, as she would from touching coals of fire.

She is made whole and bid to sin no more, and O, with what an ardent yearning after purity, with what a clinging to her LORD, and

pining never to be severed from Him by so much as the shadow of a sin, she rises from beneath His pardoning Hands to speed unburdened on her heavenward way. How doth she gather her new washed garments round her, dreading for them the soiling of one grain of dust, who once so careless dragged them through the mire and clay of earth's pollution, and as she onward speeds, tottering at times with returning weakness, or wavering as the strong breath of passion sweeps over her in fitful gusts, but still upheld by His Hand, for ever drawing nearer and nearer to the Light, to Him Who lighteneth all eternity,—the sins that once appeared to her but venial, lightly committed and as soon forgotten, now seem so hateful, that their guilt when next she finds herself overtaken in a fault, bows her to the very dust with anguish, and if for a moment she hath yielded to their power, the burden of them becomes at once intolerable, and she hath no rest till she flies back unto that blessed Refuge of the penitent, the Ministry of Consolation, there to bewail her new shortcomings, in haply more of the agony of deep repentance, than she felt when first confessing darker sins with less of spiritual discernment; and she knoweth not the while, how great a stage she hath accomplished in her journey to the Mount of GOD, how near she must have come to the Sun

of Righteousness ere in His purest radiance these light stains could show so dark; and so on from strength to strength, each confession revealing fewer sins with a deeper sense of sin's iniquity, she hasteth to the goal, not guessing, till in the very arms of her LORD she resteth, how the evil that was in her hath been purged and sifted from her as chaff is winnowed from the corn, and how in her hath been accomplished by this purifying discipline, the prophecy once uttered for all those who wait on the LORD in His appointed way: "They shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not be faint."

And this is the effect so salutary and so efficacious, of that means of grace from which men turn with contumely or indifference, and of which many speak as of a poisonous thing!

In penitence then, active, sin-renouncing, soul-converting, we have the first of the three-fold requirements which are necessary for a right confession, and a sure absolution. The next essential is Faith,—yet not faith merely in the cardinal doctrines of the Church, (that evident foundation of all spiritual life,) but a special faith in the authority and commission of the priesthood, and in this ordinance as being assuredly of divine

appointment. There must be a perfectly clear and undoubting comprehension of that wonderful and glorious system, whereby He Who through Death became the *Author* of our salvation, is now by His life at the right hand of GOD the *Finisher* thereof,—for He sits there our Great High Priest, for ever making intercession for us, and by His perpetual working through the agency of His earthly priesthood, maintaining His whole Church, with each individual member of it in sacramental life.

There must, therefore, be a plain and firm belief in this one truth, that every act performed by a priest on earth is straightway sealed by the LORD in heaven, and receives at once its perfect efficacy from His divine co-operation, and that no weakness or defection on the part of the priest—the earthly agent—can prevent his being the channel of sacramental grace, to all who come in the way of the LORD'S own fixed appointment, to seek Him and His great redemption.

The faith given unquestioning to this whole system must next be applied in detail, to the special operations of the Holy Rite of Absolution.—There must be a deep and adoring conviction, that when the human hands of him who hath received the HOLY GHOST for this express purpose, are laid upon the penitent head, and the words uttered by the human voice "I absolve thee from all thy sins,"

then invisibly the very omnipotent Hand of CHRIST Himself is laid thereon, with that of His anointed servant; and then unheard, the Voice that said unto the sick man "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace," re-echoes the absolving sentence of His representative, with His everlasting Fiat.—So that even as the darkness vanished away when He said "Let there be light," and the tempest ceased utterly when He said "Peace, be still," in like manner the dark cloud of sins is for ever dispersed before the Light of Pardoning Love, and the storms of guilt and passion subdued unto a holy peace.

In a word, the faith of the penitent must be in the unequivocal literal truth of the LORD'S own statement, that whatsoever His priests do bind on earth is bound in heaven, that whatsoever they loose on earth is loosed in heaven.

Lastly, for the due reception of this priceless blessing, an absolute truth—a perfect sincerity is required. We know that in all sacramental ordinances, the grace of GOD comes free and full to the utmost measure of the promise He unfolds in them —except there be in the recipient, some bar to the entrance of that gift within their soul.

Now of impenitence and unbelief we have already spoken, as rendering utterly abortive, even the Almighty mercy of our GOD in the precious absolution; but there is another bar to its sweet

pardon, which would no less effectually turn the blessing into a curse; and this is the slightest deviation from the fixed law which requires that not only the Truth, but the WHOLE TRUTH be told in confession.

We do not now speak of that miserable system of a partial confession, made by the penitent and received by the priest *as such*, which we trust has been already demonstrated to be a dangerous and untenable fallacy, but of a deficiency in the perfect sincerity of the confession, which is presupposed to possess a complete unreserve and fulness, as the only terms on which the absolution is to be obtained. If in a confession of this (the alone true) nature, any single sin however slight, be WILFULLY concealed or withheld, let the penitent understand at once, that such a concealment were nothing less than an act of sacrilege.

We make this statement without any softening of terms, for we who most feel bound to urge the incalculable benefit of the practice of confession, are for this very reason vividly alive to the dangers of any abuse of it. Startling as it sounds to assert even the possibility of sacrilege, there is not in reality anything in the warning to alarm the most timid mind, because the evil though in itself tremendous, is yet so very easily avoided.—Almost we would say it were difficult for any honest person

to commit it, since it is but a mechanical act that is required to avoid it. The repeating of certain words present in the mind, and ready on the lips where silence would be a crime—for be it distinctly and thoroughly understood, that we do not in any degree whatsoever commit sacrilege by sins *forgotten*, but by sins *knowingly concealed*.

Of sins forgotten there will unquestionably be many in every confession however rigidly sincere. "Cleanse Thou me from my secret faults" is still we firmly believe the cry of every penitent, when the absolving hands are about to descend upon him, but herein the very tender mercy of our GOD is specially manifest, for in the act of pleading which we make at the close of our confession, we implore forgiveness not only for all that we have confessed, but for all past sins known and *unknown*, remembered and *forgotten*; and we know that if in all sincerity we have given our utmost efforts to remember every evil thing, with fervent invocation of the HOLY GHOST to aid us in the search, then doth our FATHER in Heaven in His divine willingness to pardon, blot out with them all such offences as have escaped our memory through frailty of our nature, though known to Him whose eye can pierce the deepest recesses of the heart.

To one truly in earnest, it might seem indeed almost an unnecessary caution to warn them against

withholding any sin, when they profess to make confession of them all,—yet the awfulness of the penalty awaiting such a fault, renders it incumbent on us to leave no room for the possibility of its occurrence, through ignorance at least of its danger. Furthermore this is precisely a case in which we might say even to the most fervent, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," for we know as a general truth of undoubted acceptation with the Church, that it is just in seasons of the greatest grace that Satan is most vigorous in his efforts against the soul; then precisely when he sees it escaping from his power, ascending unto heights of holiness on the bosom of his Incarnate Conqueror, he arms himself with triple power and assails it with such fiery darts as it hath never felt before.—And so it is that at the holy tribunal of Penitence, where sin is so vigorously attacked, yea for the time destroyed, he ofttimes tries and harasses the penitent with manifold devices, and among others there is in truth a fierce temptation, which prompts the penitent to pass in silence over some degrading thought, or word, or deed, when the burning shame which must be endured in the avowal seems utterly intolerable, and the lips almost refuse to tell, that which the soul once feared not to commit, but which now in the illumination of that penitence and scrutiny is seen in

its true colours, and utterly abhorred; against the possibility of such a temptation it is well to set this truth—that it were sacrilege to yield to it. Again, there are others who deceive themselves into the belief, that such and such things are too trivial to be mentioned in confession, or that the law of charity to others (haply to the very priest himself) requires silence on certain points, and so that they may with impunity withhold some portion, however slight, of the truth of their delinquency.

Now the first objection given above is really non-existent, no sin is trifling in the sight of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and for all such difficulties as are implied in the last clause we shall give definite rules hereafter, in treating of the preparation for a first confession—only for the present remaining firm to our first position, that any wilful reserve in any kind or degree whatsoever, for any motive however plausible, is and ever must be nothing less than sacrilege—it is to abuse sacrilegiously the absolution which is given for all sins, on the faith that ALL have been confessed.

Let, then, the sinner surround himself with faith, penitence and truth, as with a shield, and so let him go, fearless of world, or flesh, or devil, to learn more of the Love of GOD than he hath ever dreamt before, in the living eloquence of perfect pardon.

Of the true nature of absolution we have already spoken, when treating of that faith in its power which is required of the penitent; but although we can express what it is in the letter by words easy to be understood, we are very certain that none will ever comprehend it in the reality of its glorious mercy, its surpassing sweetness, till CHRIST hath led them of His infinite pity, to seek it for themselves and to obtain it. It is easy to say that it is, as His Word of Truth declared, complete forgiveness—that the pardon uttered on earth is irrevocable for ever and ever in heaven, that His pierced hands are in very truth laid upon the guilty head with those of His Priest, so that the blood flowing from them does at that hour, in actual fact, blot out the handwriting that was against us, and that the sins then and there forgiven utterly shall never be recorded for our condemnation at the judgment,—that He will remember our iniquity no more, and though our sins have been as scarlet yet now hath He made us white as snow.

It is easy to say all this, and to understand it, but who, oh! who could ever dream, except by blissful sweet experience, what a very sacrament of consolation and of heavenly love is here—what a paradise of rest, and peace, and tenderest reconciliation, is around and within the absolved soul. The sense of His displeasure more crushing and

intolerable than the weight of mountains, is lifted off and gone. The cloud with which He had covered Himself so that our prayers could not pierce through, because we had transgressed and rebelled, and He had not pardoned, is dispersed as the mist when the sun ariseth, and the brightness of His Love and loving Pardon comes beaming in upon the soul, in all the radiance of the morning light when night hath fled away. No mortal words can ever tell how vivid, how inexpressibly blessed, in that moment of perfect restoration, is the sense of the LORD'S own presence, which comes flooding the penitent with the purest joy and comfort, and the sweetest consciousness of that ineffable union renewed which sin had marred. The soul perceives almost with trembling ecstacy, that she is altogether given back to Him, restored unto His very Bosom,—the weary head seems to lean against His very Heart, and His everlasting arms are folded round her with sheltering tenderness. Oh! then, how does it seem that but to lie thus on His Breast with closed eyes and heart all still, the lacerated memory soothed, the wounded conscience healed, is nothing less than a foretaste of heaven itself—heaven on earth with Him, Who alone gives light and joy to the radiant home of angels round His throne.

These are in truth, the unspeakable things learned only by the soul when thus caught up

into Paradise, which if it be not unlawful, it is at least impossible for a man to utter.—But if we cannot convey in words the faintest idea of the exceeding riches of this heavenly blessing of Absolution, we can at least pray for all who read these pages, and for all the weary and heavy laden, the desolate and desponding, the true in heart and hope, that they may be brought to taste for themselves the sweetness of this celestial comfort, and that they may learn then how truly, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things GOD hath prepared *even on earth* for them that love Him.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Priest.

WERE any proof required beyond that of inherent Truth, to attest the Divine origin of the Church as the creation of the Almighty Love and Will, to which life is given by the very indwelling of the HOLY GHOST Himself, it would be found in that wonderful harmony and completeness of the whole, which renders it impossible to touch on any one point, without striking as it were a chord that vibrates, through every portion of the whole beautiful fabric. Truth so rises out of Truth, doctrine so rests on doctrine, that a right understanding of any one detail, involves a perfect comprehension of the entire system. This fact meets us at every turn, but it has especially struck us very forcibly, when about to speak of the position held by the Priest in this Sacred Or-

dinance, and of the manner in which he is to be regarded by the penitent. His office and the reverence due to him, depend entirely on that cardinal doctrine of the earthly priesthood, as the divinely appointed channel through which the Omnipotent Power of the sinless High Priest in heaven, is conveyed to the Ordinances of the Church, and through them applied to the souls of His members—this again rests on the Sacramental union of CHRIST with His Church, and that on the Mystery of the Incarnation, and so system melting into system, we are led round the glorious circle of the Truth Divine, which like the ring that symbolizes eternity, hath neither beginning nor end, but a perfect unity in purpose and detail.

It is therefore no mere question of courtesy or convention, which must influence us in our reverence for the Priest, but the solemn recognition of those deep and awful truths of which we have been speaking. In them we find, that he is to be regarded as one possessed of nothing less than the authority of the LORD CHRIST Himself, as the Church commands him to declare with his own mouth in the Absolution—His divinely commissioned messenger, into whom as into a vessel GOD's power hath been poured, that he may minister to men in CHRIST's stead; his every sacer-

dotal word and act having a perfect efficacy by the co-operation of the Ever-Present LORD. Now in order fully to realize the exceeding sacredness with which he is thus invested through his office, we must consider well the stupendous nature of his ordination gift—which is nothing less than the communication of the very GOD, the HOLY GHOST Himself, so that all the honour, reverence, and humble submission which we can pay to him (and heaven forbid that we should stint the measure of it,) is paid not to the man himself, but to the authority of CHRIST with which he is invested, and thus by obvious conclusion to CHRIST Himself.

Seems this indeed a startling degree to which with S. Paul we would magnify his office? but, what saith the LORD Himself, do not our poor words the rather fall far short of that which His convey when He saith, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me."—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth Me." "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me."

These solemn statements and the law which they make unto us of perfect obedience and reverence to the representative of CHRIST, apply, of course, to all who have received the priestly

office, by the anointing of the HOLY GHOST in ordination; yet since the condition of society is such, that under ordinary circumstances we are brought in contact with them only, through the public services of the Church, where their individual claims are lost in the reverence due to these and to the Holy Place itself; or else in the common relations of life, where their sacred office is, alas! too much forgotten by us and too much laid aside by them—it remains that it is only in their private ministrations, such as the Ordinance of Confession, and in the various phases of spiritual guidance, that we are called upon really to define their position over us and to act on its requirements. The first great effort of the penitent, therefore, must be to dispossess his mind of all thought of the personality of the Priest *as a man*, and to see in him *only* the consecrated representative of His LORD—he must look through and beyond the fellow creature to the CHRIST in Whom he is, and Who is in him—giving him power to pardon, and a mouth and wisdom wherewith to speak pure words of counsel, and to guide us into all truth and righteousness. Viewed in this light we must consider him as the father of our souls, of the souls new born in CHRIST, by Holy Baptism; and it is precisely that honour and unquestioning obedience due from a child to his parent, which we are bound to render to the Priest.

It is to this spiritual relation that S. Paul alludes when he talks of S. Timothy, his "own son in the faith," and in truth, this is a part of the Apostolic system, of which we have the most clear and undoubted evidence, for these our first and saintly fathers in the Church, ceased not to recall to the members of their LORD, how truly they were linked to them, in the bond of this spiritual paternity; like as when S. Paul saith so persuasively, "I speak as unto my children," and S. John with his unfailing tenderness, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the Truth"—ever, in short, praying them in varied language to be followers of GOD as "dear children."—We scruple not therefore to affirm, according as we have received from those who walked with the SON of GOD on earth, that all the requirements of the fifth commandment are binding upon us, with respect to these our spiritual fathers, in a different but not less exalted sense, than as regards the duties we owe our natural parents, for these anointed ones, are our fathers, because they are, as Priests, in a peculiar manner in Him the Great High Priest from whom our new and spiritual existence is derived.

As fathers then, whose claims to the title are drawn from a source so deeply sacred, we do indeed owe them all pure respect, all humble deference, all earnest true obedience *only in the*

Lord, and utterly devoid of any such familiarity or tender intimacy, as we should have with those whose children we are by virtue of the natural life, and not, as in this case, through the Divine Life of the LORD CHRIST Himself.

We can never too strongly impress upon the penitent the absolute necessity of keeping these spiritual relations, wholly free from all earthly feeling—distinct and apart from human affections and impulses. It is, we know, the instinct of our nature, that toward all our fellow-creatures we should entertain various degrees of sympathy or antipathy; but with regard to these our spiritual fathers, we may not permit ourselves so much as to consider, whether our sentiments towards them, are those of attraction or repulsion, for they are not as individual men to us, but the Sacred Representatives of our LORD, who are there in His stead to beseech us to repent, and to reconcile us unto the FATHER.

We maintain that it is even well to avoid with them, such liberties of ordinary intercourse, as we should freely allow ourselves with other friends, for the spiritual link between the ghostly father and his child, is of so close and binding a nature, admitting the Priest into the very deepest recesses of the soul, that it is absolutely essential, to keep such an intimate relation fully invested with all

the awfulness of its sanctity, which the least touch of earthly feeling would mar.

Human nature is so prone to wrest even the most holy things to evil, that it is necessary for each penitent, to establish a solemn guard over the pure blessing of this Penitential Rite, as well as over that Holy Sacrament which a man may receive unto his hurt, and forasmuch as it is precisely in this Ordinance that we learn how deceitful above all things is the heart, and desperately wicked, we must watch the issues thereof with a tenfold care, lest, through frailty of our nature we detract in any degree from this Divine Benefit.

Yet let not any think for a moment, that there is aught in these cautions to alarm even the most timid, for there are tests which can show us from afar off, the least threatening of any danger, of our falling into a state of feeling unbefitting such a solemn bond as that of penitent and priest, and they who have so much of the Love of CHRIST within their hearts as to lead them to this stern discipline, will never lack the self-denial requisite to check all undue feelings and remove the possibility of their indulgence.

We should ill perform the task we have set before ourselves, of seeking to win our brethren beloved in CHRIST, to this Rite of sacramental

rest, by showing them the deep beauty and joyfulness thereof—if we failed to point out to them at the same time, the manner in which their frailty might pervert it to their injury. It is because of the unspeakable estimation in which we hold this priceless Blessing that we are very jealous for its perfect purity. It needs not our application of the rule to this particular case, to demonstrate that which is an undoubted principle in Christian Theology, that the higher our privileges, the greater our responsibility and the risk of abusing them. Our deepest blessings are hedged up with dangers—and it is ever in the holiest Eden of CHRIST's Love, where most we walk with GOD, that the serpent lurks with subtlest wiles to ruin us.

But in truth there is no sacred thing, however essential to our salvation which we could urge upon our brethren, without cautioning them against the special risks of its perversion. Could we even teach a child to pray, without warning him, that irreverence, carelessness, or self-complacency in devotion, can deeply mar the act of worship?—and so in like manner the qualities essential for the right use of this blessed Ordinance, have their opposite evils which we must and may most easily avoid.

We have said that there are tests by which we can judge, whether there be aught unspi-

ritual or exaggerated in our feelings towards the ghostly father, and whether we have at all separated the individual from his sacred office, in the honour and willing duty we have paid to him, and let some overweening sentiment mingle with our due appreciation of his holiness and value; and these tests are very simple, varying of course according to different cases, but of a nature to suggest themselves at once to every honest mind. For instance, if a penitent who is in the habit of frequent confession, should detect, in the motive of his desire on any occasion to resort to this pure Ordinance, a lurking wish to be again brought in contact with his spiritual father, to experience his kindness and watchful interest, he may rest assured that there is then some undue feeling which requires an instant check,—or if he should perceive that he thinks more of the comfort of his sympathy and counsel, than of the deep blessedness of absolution, then assuredly there is some sin stealing in, which must be relinquished ere that holy pardon can be complete. Or, again, should he feel if circumstances separated him from him, an unwillingness to seek the benefit of the Rite from any other—it is evident that the individuality of the human Priest hath obscured for him, in it, the Divine Presence of the very LORD Himself.

To this last test some might object by saying, that there is a legitimate reason for shrinking from any change, when we have placed ourselves under the guidance of one especially, who has haply watched and led us through many difficulties and trials, and consequently knows our temptations and our struggles as none other could. But this does not apply to the mere act of confession, which may be made to any, from whom by virtue of their office, that absolution can be obtained, whose efficacy even in the most extreme case cannot be affected by the channel through which it is bestowed. This treasure is at all times in earthen vessels, and whether they be made in their individual personality to honour or to dishonour, it matters not, the treasure is still the same!

Furthermore, there is, we conceive, a measure of faithlessness, in respect to the doctrine of priestly power and authority, if we lay much stress on the superior wisdom, or saintly attainments of one priest over another, as a reason for specially seeking their counsel, seeing that whatever may be their individual differences, it is none other than the HOLY GHOST Himself, who speaks through their mouth, to all who self-distrusting and undoubtingly confident in the authority of CHRIST committed to them, do seek at their lips the Will of GOD—for they, His ambassadors to

men, are most assuredly those to whom it was said, "Take no thought, how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your FATHER that speaketh in you." So entirely do we trust this co-operation of CHRIST with His Priests through the HOLY GHOST, that we should hold any advice, given in *sincerity* by them, to be indeed the Will of GOD for the penitent, even if in the abstract and so far as man may see, its expediency might be questioned.

But in any case, supposing even, that there were a certainty of obtaining wiser counsels from one than from another, it were a far less evil to lose the advantage of the superior wisdom, than to allow any unbecoming or exaggerated feeling towards the individual Priest, to taint this holy discipline unto the soul. Therefore we affirm positively that if any such be found, by the tests we have named, or others, to exist—the penitent must at whatever cost, relinquish the care of the spiritual father in question, and seek at once another, to whom in soberness and calm, he may apply for ghostly counsel and advice, with the benefit of absolution.

For these reasons, although the Church allows her children perfect liberty, to whom to open their

griefs, we must take most earnest heed, that no individual bias influence us in our choice. We do not hesitate to say, that it has been and is a great evil amongst us, that many persons have allowed themselves (doubtless unconsciously) to be moved, by secret vanity or the desire of self-gratification, to apply only to such as have attained great celebrity in the Church, feeling proud to have their names linked to those with which the world rings. This is not well; neither for the holy men, who are thus burdened with an amount of work, which a lifetime would not suffice to perform fully, whilst hundreds of their fellow-priests, willing to labour in like manner, do little or nothing in this important branch of their duty—nor for the penitent, who thus destroys the sacred secrecy and perfect purity of motive, which ought to environ all things pertaining to the discipline of GOD upon his soul.

In the LORD then, be all honour, reverence, and childlike obedience paid to those who by virtue of our new birth in CHRIST are set as fathers to our souls—nor must this be only an obedience in name, after the manner of some who are ever ready to show a willing deference unto the Priest, and love to sit at his very feet to learn of him—till such time as his authoritative hand is laid upon some darling sin, some evil disposition which they

will not count as such, and then straightway starting aside like a broken bow, they hold themselves aggrieved as by an undue exercise of power, and argue with him for the mastery. This is but to act like those of whom their Master spake, saying, "Why call ye Me LORD, LORD, and do not the things which I say?" Vain is the outward reverence to His anointed messenger, in word and gesture, if the proud neck is reared against the yoke, so soon as it presseth tighter than they will to bear. This is not as the LORD commands to receive the CHRIST in him. The obedience which alone befits the humble soul in spiritual relations must be free and unquestioning, preventing with a settled purpose of submission, every command, which the judgment of the priest may see fit to lay upon us.

We say not that this obedience must of necessity extend, to all the occurrences and trials of our existence. No spiritual father would wish to hedge us in too much, even with the deep blessing of his care, for doubtless our strength could not be tested without due liberty of action, but we must leave it to him to settle the boundaries of our freedom,—for in confession it scarce can fail but we should touch on all the springs and influences of ourinner life, and for every thing therein made known, our sins, temptations, trials, and dangers, in all their bearings, we are bound to

submit ourselves to the remedies and preventions prescribed, whatsoever they may be. Possibly in these very revelations he may see it good for us to leave us much liberty—but whether he so deal with us, or the rather find it needful to bind our rebel passions and our wayward hearts in chains, and whether in the abstract some might differ from his mode of government—it sufficeth for he penitent that he is the ambassador of CHRIST o him, and he must accept his words as from the LORD—for how saith the HOLY GHOST? "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of HOSTS."

None need fear that this pure submissive trust will be abused, or individual responsibility lessened by overweening rule—for He the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls keepeth watch alike over the pastors and the flocks—He will not suffer them rashly to wound His sheep, He will give them as we said, the mouth and wisdom wherewith to lead us, His power will nerve them, His tenderness restrain and His indwelling Spirit guide them, "to set scourges over our thoughts, and the discipline of wisdom over our heart, that they spare not for our ignorance, and pass not by our sins,"—for He it is indeed who willeth, that after this manner they too should

know what is in man, that they in His stead may minister unto His people.

This same law of implicit obedience is binding on the penitent in confession under all circumstances. For instance, it happens not unfrequently that a person is absent for a time from their ordinary guide, and yet desires on some occasion to receive the benefit of absolution before approaching the altar of the Sinless LORD, and that for this purpose he resorts to a stranger priest, simply for the performance of his function, and without any intention of placing himself finally under his guidance; now in such a case the penitent would still be bound to obey any direction given him by this provisionary counsellor, with regard to the sins he had confessed, or the temptations thereby revealed—for the authority is not in the individual but in his office.

Nor is this honour and reverential obedience, albeit our bounden duty, given without receiving in return its recompense and exceeding rich reward,—for even as the child with all the offering of its submissive trust, could never attain the measure of the love and care still lavished on it by the parent's heart, so do these fathers of our souls repay us a hundred fold all we can offer them—by their deep sympathy and watchful care, their blessed intercession for us, their tender pity,

their merciful severity, and the salutary medicine of their just rebuke. Oh let a man but taste of these and he will cry out unto the priests as did the Psalmist, "Yea, let the righteous rather smite me friendly and reprove me," for he knoweth that their precious balms will never break his head, but only the rather heal his wounded heart; and it shall not fail, that when he hath experienced but a little of that Love of CHRIST which is so wonderfully made known in this His delegated power and authority, his whole soul filled with gratitude will gather itself up into this one cry, "Blessed—yea blessed indeed is he who cometh in the name of the LORD."

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Dangers of Spiritual Guidance without Confession.

We have spoken much, (howbeit too little for the depth of our conviction) of the intrinsic value of the ordinance of confession, and the actual benefit it conveys, but there is besides all we have urged, an extraneous argument in favour of its use, which powerfully demonstrates that it is indeed well nigh a *necessity* for the soul. This consists simply in the fact, that when persons abstain for any reason whatever, from this the legitimate relief which the Church hath provided for their spiritual trials and necessities, it invariably happens that they use in its stead, that most dangerous substitute, only too unhappily prevalent, of *guidance without confession*.

This unhappy system is productive more than

we can tell of subtle and far spreading evil. It is the special attraction and characteristic of that erroneous religionism which is understood by the misapplied term "Evangelical," and in our own Church it is the habitual resource of those who fail to receive the truth of sacramental grace. It must needs be so. In all earnest souls there will ever be an imperative call for some palpable help, some living sympathy, some truer guide than their own sorely biassed judgment, amid all the perplexities and dangers of their inner life—a call foreknown by our blessed LORD when He instituted this rite, which is so perfect a response to it, and for which, if they resort not to it, they must needs make to themselves some other substitute. So soon as the soul, quickened by the baptismal grace that haply hath too long lain dormant, begins to take more earnest heed for the things to come, to tremble for her eternity, to doubt of her own faith, to ask herself the ground of her fainting hope—it cannot fail but that a thousand occasions will arise when self-reliance is impossible, and external help from one in authority, an absolute essential.

There are times when the mind is darkened by distracting fears, springing probably from its own disease, and when the face of our FATHER in Heaven is as it were veiled from us, in the thick cloud through which our prayers cannot pierce—times

when the subtlest temptations come to us, in so goodly a form, that we cannot tell whether it is Satan or an angel of light that stands before us —times when the conscience grown timid in its efforts at self-knowledge, dreads a sin in every step, and dares not advance to the right hand or to the left—times when two courses of action are before us, each seeming to claim our utmost duty, and we know not which to choose—yea, times when we feel that the struggling passions are so deceitfully swaying us, the might of inclination so strong within us, that we tremble lest we unwittingly call good evil and evil good, and count that innocent for us which is in truth as some rank poison; and then it is that the very attributes of our nature compel us to cry out for a teacher, a guide, who in the name of the LORD JESUS shall make our darkness to be light, and trace out for our feet the narrow path wherein our safety lieth. And thus is it that by imperious necessity all souls that truly seek the CHRIST are driven to his Priests even when haply they recognise not the Divine commission or the priestly power. But we affirm solemnly that so to seek their guidance without confession, is not only most dangerous, but most pernicious, full of perplexity to the teacher, and of subtle evil to the taught.

Better were it, we maintain, for souls to wrestle

on alone amid all the dimness and anguish of their heavenward struggle, than to fly for succour to the Priest with the veil upon their hearts, which hides their true condition from him and from themselves. Self-knowledge is the rarest of all acquirements, impracticable we believe without confession, wherein we are compelled not only to so stern an examination of ourselves, but to the truer sifting of the Priest's impartial hand, which no deep passion or hidden impulse sways; and if we know not ourselves, how shall we truly describe our state, or the influences that act on us, to others?

When we seek guidance without confession we offer no other test but that of *our feelings*, of all the most fallacious, the most deceiving, the most utterly varying and futile. Oh! if by this false measure we pretend to try the spirits that are working in us, into what dangers, yea into what madness, shall we be driven! Has it not been so a thousand times, to the bitter agony of many a deceived soul? How many are notorious for having believed the very HOLY GHOST was working in them, when Satan alone was wiling them to perdition. Whence came the false prophets, the false Christs, but from this fatal presumption, this judging of themselves by secret impulses, until they counted that to be GOD'S inspiration, which was but vanity, self-love, or ambition, wrought up

to wild enthusiasm. Doubtless this is the worst extremity of the evil, into which a man may be led by making his own feelings the test of his spiritual condition; yet in all its degrees, brethren, doubt not that it is a deadly evil, and a fearful danger.

This it is which has sent the murderer joyous to the gallows, self-assured of his own salvation—this, which has made the startled profligate account himself a saint,—driven the fearful to despair,—crushed with undue fear the timid heart which GOD had not made sad,—and in a thousand different forms, robed in false colouring, the souls that deceiving others are themselves deceived. For what, O brethren beloved in the LORD, is the one only certain test of the soul—the test on which GOD hath set His seal, the one terrible and sure, which is appointed for our trial at the awful judgment—what but *our sins?* By them the Judge shall try us when we stand between the Life Everlasting and the Everlasting Fire, not knowing unto which we may be given—by them alone His representatives can try us now while our brief probation rushes on to meet the swift approaching death; and solemnly we declare, not only because of our conviction that the Divine Imprimatur is set on this test and none other, but also by reason of our practical experience, that if any presume to seek aid from the

Priest, without first showing themselves unto him, that he may see how far the leprous taint hath spread, they will but bring confusion and perplexity upon him and upon themselves. Thus it must needs be then and ever, when any seek the good things of GOD by other means than those of His appointment. Our LORD CHRIST, as we said, foreknew this special necessity of the soul for help, external and authoritative, as well as our weightier need of cleansing in absolution, and both were provided for us in this great ordinance: how then can it fail if we turn from the way which He hath set before us, to hew out paths of our own devising, but that snares and pitfalls should await our every step, and haply even some precipice for our destruction?

These are strong cautions, yet not too strong for the evil, which we have actually seen arise from that species of intercourse between the Priest and his charge, which is involved in the system of guidance without confession. The most glaring perhaps of these pernicious results, is the fatal encouragement it gives to that deadly poison of the soul, *eligious vanity*.

There is no pleasure more seductive to many inds, and especially to those of women, than at of talking of their religious feelings and exriences, an indulgence which can never be other-

wise than most injurious, except when it is accompanied by that humiliating revelation of actual sin, which must prevent its ministering to our vanity. It hath been well said, "that we think good thoughts, and then unsanctify them by telling them to others," and in truth all holy feelings and desires, for ever lose their bloom and fragrance in the sight of Him, for Whom alone they should be kept a silent sacred offering, if their sweetness is at any time revealed to other eye than His alone.

That which renders this system especially pernicious as a minister to spiritual vanity, is that the danger is so insidious, so hidden from those whom it assails. We believe, in all good faith, that persons go with most upright intentions to ask for counsel from their Pastor, or to tell him of their despondency and doubts, and dream not the while, that they are but nourishing the self-love and self-consciousness which lie like a blight upon their soul. They dream it not, because it requires in truth a searching hand to discover, that vanity lurks *most* in their expressions of repentance and humility, and in the very protestations they make of their hatred of themselves.

They go to some Priest, saintly and good, and it is very sweet to tell, how lowly penitent they are to him, who so oft hath preached repentance, to tell it even with tears, it may be *but in general*

terms, without specifying one single degrading sin, one impure thought which could in truth lower them in his eyes; yea, the rather all the while though they know it not, there lurks within their heart the subtle thought that he thinks the better of them for their penitence, and believes they judge themselves too harshly. So again in respect to humility; perverting, alas, the LORD'S own command, they take the lowest place that their counsellor may bid them go up higher. They deplore their want of energy and devotedness, telling how little they have done for CHRIST, unknowing that they are hoping secretly the priest will think it much, and only count their humble plaint of short-comings a proof how large their love and their desire.

Pages might be filled in multiplying the instances, by which the deadliest forms of self-indulgence and spiritual vanity may be fostered in this confidential intercourse, where the deep underlying sin is never revealed; but it is besides the fertile source of many other evils of a like description.

Thus for example, we believe that many persons have recourse to a spiritual guide, under the firm persuasion that their object is really to obtain from him, the counsels necessary for their safe course heavenward,—when in reality their one sole motive, is to gratify their secret desire to make

themselves an object of interest, and to obtain the human sympathy which is so sweet from any source, and specially dear from one who merits our reverence and esteem; to know themselves the objects of his prayers, and a source of anxious care to him, is very pleasant to the hearts that have not detected their self-love; and how many, alas! of the mournful complaints of religious despondency are uttered, unknowingly to win the kind compassion, and the cheering encouragement, so flattering and so dangerous, when the real evils of the soul, its debasing sins, are hidden, and how many statements are made of enthusiastic aspirings after holiness, because unconsciously they love to see the approving look, to hear the gentle caution, that they try not their powers over much.

Again, he to whom they go, is haply one on whose words thousands besides themselves have hung in admiration of his holiness and zeal; and to win his friendship, or even to hold intercourse with him, when his attention is specially directed to themselves, is a source of secret pride and pleasure; and so they go to him—full of wants that seem to spring from deep devotion, but are in truth created by the hope that he will anxiously supply them.

Alas, alas! brethren, beloved in the LORD, this is not the way of the Cross. Better, as we said before, to wander on alone, amid perplexity and

doubt, helpless and unaided, in darkness often, in weakness and in fear, tempted, deluded, bewildered by conflicting voices, seeking a path and finding none,—better so, we maintain, than to seek a refuge so deceitful, to hear the "Peace, peace," when there is no peace, and when there can be none with any truth.

But how different, as we have striven to show in every page which we have written, if in the way of CHRIST'S appointment we seek the spiritual physician, revealing all the diseases and corruptions of our soul, so that he may minister unto it with certain knowledge of our state. Then if aught of vanity hath lurked in our intercourse with him, it is discovered by the HOLY SPIRIT aiding us to search our souls,—and straightway is confessed aloud to our own deeper shame, and so if any motive, save the pure desire of help and counsel in our upward strife hath marred our fair seeming purpose, forth must we drag the evil thing unto the light of day, before the very eyes we least could bear should look on it, and receive the salutary words of caution or rebuke, instead of those so sweetly flattering which had been ours, if these sins and temptations had been unrevealed.

Well were it, if the day could come, when all Priests, like some most wise whom our Church

possesses, refused to minister relief without the knowledge of the ill, to prescribe the remedy in ignorance of the disease. But till such time, as they are led to take this bold stand on the strength of CHRIST's command, for catholic discipline and truth,—tempt we them not, brethren, to injure our spiritual life, and to debase their own office by acting as the soul's physician when they know not where its sickness lies, and when they so risk, in their sad uncertainty, to administer poison to the very children they would save.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Preparation for a First Confession.

AND now at length we turn to a more grateful task, than that which hath kept us lingering as it were, on the threshold of the sacramental rest, to which we so long to bring the beloved brethren, who like ourselves, are going through this vale of misery; and who are sure to faint and wander by the way, except they use it for a well, drinking of those pools of water, which He Who is Himself the Well of Life, hath filled for them, and of which this holy ordinance is well nigh the sweetest and the most refreshing. Hitherto our work has been to strive, so far as in us lay, to overcome the unhappy prejudices prevalent against the Rite, which we so truly know by the Word of CHRIST, and the experience of many a travailing and weary soul, to be indeed a heaven-born and precious blessing;

and it could not fail but that pain and discouragement should be with us in this labour, when we have been compelled to recall the arguments of unbelief, and the ungracious words which have been levelled against this pure provision of our LORD'S dear mercy, and to look forward with a mournful certainty to the indignant opposition, the injustice and contempt, which await us for the words that we have spoken in these pages, though uttered with the whole heart's conviction, with the solemn desire to echo only the utterance of the Truth Divine, and prompted by an ardent yearning over those who like ourselves are suffering from sin, that they might come unto this fountain and be cleansed.

And now we pass from this more trying work, from cautions against misunderstanding or abuse of so holy an ordinance, to the task most sweet indeed, of lending what help we may to those who cavil not, nor doubt, but gladly and thankfully desire that they too should be permitted to open their deep load of grief at some kind father's knee, and receive the blessed pardon on their weary heads.

Many such we believe there are, who are only deterred from this pure Rite because they know not how it may be applied to their necessities, nor by what means they may prepare themselves

to receive it efficaciously,—and it is to these that we come in thankfulness and love. Passing from the outer world and its many cavillers, who are so loud in their invectives against the ordinance of which they know nought, but that many have given it an evil name, and others have misused it, we turn to where in some quiet lonely room, there haply kneels a brother or a sister in anguish and disquietude of soul.—In anguish, for assuredly there is no burden so intolerable as the weight of *conscious* sin, when some deep probing, from the hand of GOD, hath revealed it unto us, and with the revelation, hath caused the light of His own awful purity to flash like a flame of fire upon the soul, so that while the cry ariseth from our very heart "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips: —yea, my wickednesses are gone over my head, and are like a sore burden too heavy for me to bear," still the awakened conscience seems ever to echo back in trembling and dismay—"And *Thou* continuest holy, O Thou Worship of Israel!"

Bitter indeed is this agony of repentance, this longing to be free from the chain of our sins, that we may rise and live to CHRIST—but how greatly is that bitterness increased when we know, that there *are* the means of pardon and restored freedom in His own Church, and yet that for us they seem to be unattainable, because there are none

to tell us how we may obtain this treasure, or how we may prepare ourselves so that we risk not to receive it sacrilegiously. In such a case as this, it doth indeed seem as if we had no place to flee unto, and no man cared for our soul, and we learn then the deep truth of these mournful words, "a wounded spirit who can bear?" It may be, there are none of whom we can ask counsel; for it ofttimes happens in the experience of our spiritual trials, that the friends who are given to us in ties of blood, are precisely those who cannot share with us in our belief on many points,—whom prejudice hath alienated haply from the deepest truths of Sacramental Life, and from this blest ordinance above all others. Often, we doubt not, this want of sympathy in our natural supporters is specially permitted by our LORD, that He may teach us more fully, how in the membership of His Body all earthly relations are supplied in spiritual bonds, that endure unto eternity. Deep of meaning indeed are those words which tell us that in the Church of CHRIST, "the desolate hath many more children than she that hath an husband," and not children only, but fathers, brethren and sisters, are ours in that most sacred Fellowship.

Therefore art thou not alone, whosoever thou art that weepest in thy silent room. Many brethren are kneeling with thee, praying for thee, as for all

who have not yet been led to this sweet rest, that a way may be opened for thee, and strength be given thee to seek and win its deep pain and its deeper joy,—a father waits thee true and tender in the Priest, whom thou mayest choose to be thy special guide, and messengers are sent thee even now to aid thee in that long work of preparation, which is as yet so strange a toil to thine unaccustomed conscience. Be it then to thee, when this little book is in thy hand, as though a loving friend drew near unto thee and knelt down by thy side, ready to help thee in thy doubt and terror, in each moment of perplexity or fainting courage, which may assail thee in the bitter task of retrospection, till, guided by many a sure and well tried rule, re-echoed to thee now from holy teachers, thou come in safety to that haven where thou wouldest be, even the haven of peace and pardon.

Cast aside thy fears then, and the mournful bewilderment, akin well nigh unto despair, with which thou hast attempted to look back on thy past life, and seen it only offer to thy saddened eyes a mass of vague and half forgotten sins, so mingled with events and feelings sinless in themselves, that it hath seemed to thee impossible so much as to form an estimate of their extent, far less to state them fully and clearly to a scrutinizing judge: dismiss thy fears, for He Who vested in

His Priests the power to pardon, will ever grant the penitent due grace and wisdom for confession, and there is many a simple rule which can guide thee through the labyrinth of thine inner life, and cause the vanished years to yield up each its freight of sin with method and with truth.

And now if thou wilt hearken to the friend that longs to help and comfort thee, we will describe unto thee step by step, according as we have been taught, the course thou must pursue.

First then, it is essential, that thou commence thy preparation with soberness and calm. Strive, not to let thy mind dwell on the anguish of disclosure, or the greatness of the shame it will involve: set before thyself as thy one object for the present only to attain and to reveal *the truth:* avoid excitement with especial care, and let not thy feelings overcome thee, as the tide of recollection rushes over thee: seek thou to look on thy soul's history with quiet reasonable scrutiny, as though it were the existence of another thou wert set to judge. For this purpose an especial season must be appointed, since reason itself will tell thee, that it is a work which must extend through many days, a portion of each one being given to it in solemn retirement and solitude. The length of this period must be determined by individual necessity, yet whilst thou art careful not to stint the measure of it—it will be well to fix some de-

finite limit beyond which thou mayest not pass, else will thy conscience grow timid, and nervous as it were, and refuse to admit thy work accomplished, when thou hast done thy very best.—Three weeks or a month were in most cases the very utmost that could be required for a review of any life, however complicated; and for those who could not bear such long anticipation of their coming trial, a far shorter period might well suffice. Strive during the whole of this time so far as possible to abstract thy mind from all worldly thoughts and cares — seek to have ever before thee the one thought of the awful Judgment, from whose inevitable scrutiny thou canst not escape. Add to thine ordinary devotions certain prayers for grace, for penitence, for truth, of which thou wilt find models in the Psalms, in several of the collects, and in many works by holy men which thou mayest easily procure, and keep thou ever these words on thy lips and in thy heart—"Try me, O GOD, and seek the ground of my heart, prove me and examine my thoughts, look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

But these are only accessories to that one great means of preparation—the solemn invocation of the HOLY GHOST, on which all the rest depend, and on which thy hope and sole security must rest.

For we have this faith, that, in very truth, the Holy Paraclete, of whom it was promised that He should call all things to our remembrance, doth grant unto the penitent for this express purpose a peculiar illumination, which is in one sense almost miraculous. It were indeed a task of well nigh insurmountable difficulty, to penetrate and then reveal the surging mass of bygone sin, if this Divine Enlightener, lent not a peculiar and unwonted aid; but that He does indeed, in His deep mercy give this promised help, when solemnly invoked, through Him Whose Blood cleanseth from all sin—the experience of every penitent, who hath ever sought it, will most surely testify.

It is indeed wonderful, how at the bidding of that Immaculate Spirit, the long buried and forgotten sins come starting forth from their tomb in the past, even as the dead men shall burst from their graves at the call of the Son of Man. One by one they rise upon the awakening memory, drawing after them as it were a train of followers, till our whole inner life seems gradually mapped out before our eyes, and we are fain to cry out in glad astonishment and thankfulness at the needful revelation, "If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me, then shall my night be turned into day; truly Thou hast searched me out and known me!"

Thou must fully and distinctly understand however, that even with the Divine aid of the Holy Paraclete, full many a sin will still be forgotten by thy frail memory, and thou mayest not by reason of this let thy heart be troubled; for it is a truth, full of mercy and sweet comfort, that where confession hath been amply and sincerely made of all we can remember, then our forgotten sins, whatsoever they may be, are pardoned likewise in the free and blessed absolution. Doubt not then, but earnestly believe, that it will be so in truth. In the deep prayer for pardon and mercy, with which, according to custom, thou dost close thy confession, and implore thine absolution, thou dost ask pardon for all thy past sins known and unknown, remembered and forgotten, and the answer which cometh, spoken by thy very LORD Himself through His Church, is nothing less than this, "I absolve thee from ALL thy sins." When therefore by every means thou canst devise thou hast striven to recall thy past offences, in complete detail, resign thyself without a doubt or fear to the blessed hope of perfect pardon, not for these only, but for all others also, which are known to Him alone Who pardoneth.

Now concerning the Invocation of the HOLY SPIRIT for special aid in thy confession, it must be solemn, ever renewed and continuous. It were well that thou commence by making it the parti-

eular subject of thy Eucharistic Prayer, when thou art next permitted to join in the August Sacrifice of the most precious Body and Blood of Him, Who is the Well Beloved of the FATHER, and if thou art one who is not yet admitted to an actual participation in that Glorious Sacrament, yet mayst thou unite thyself and thy request, with the intercession therein made by our High Priest Himself, and what shall GOD refuse thee, Who hath given thee thus His only SON?

After this, thou must ever commence thine examination, carried on from day to day, with the fervent renewal of thy one request that GOD the HOLY GHOST would aid thee in thy holy task. Certain hours daily must be set apart for thy work of preparation; according to thine ability, choose thou such times as shall be most secure from interruption, the still and solemn night when the sleepless Eye is alone upon thee, or the quiet hours of the morning when the busy world is chafing onwards to its end, and takes no heed of thee.— Betake thee to a perfect solitude, and when thou hast entered thy closet shut to the door, that thy FATHER who seeth in secret, may alone be wi[th] thee in that task which at the Day of Judgm shall be openly rewarded. Kneel down, fo that attitude which alone befitteth the confes of thy sins, it is meet that thou shouldest

[s]earch into them, that so as thou cou

their mournful number, thy very posture may, with mute continual supplication, plead for thy needful pardon. Kneel then, and if thy frail body sink at long continuance in that humble frame, sit not thou at least in luxurious ease, but lowly as Job did, whose bodily ills were haply less mournful in the sight of GOD than the foul diseases of thy soul. When thou hast placed thyself thus as it were in the Presence of GOD, then as we have said, lift thou up thy pleading hands to heaven, to ask the help of that pure Spirit who shall guide thee into all Truth, and after thy prayer is done bow thy head and close thine eyes and let thy soul go wandering back, through the long vista of departed years, to seek out all the sins with which, if thou judge not thyself, the Accuser of the Brethren will too surely charge thee at the Last Tremendous Day.

And now in making the actual record of thine offences in thought, word, and deed, as thou wouldest desire to detail them to the Priest, thou wilt find it, we believe, absolutely necessary to note them down in writing one by one as they recur to thee; for the very greatness of the number which in most cases more or less must swell a first confession, would render it impossible for thee to retain them all at once in thy memory, even if the solemnity and anguish of the actual avowal to the priest did not so agitate and overwhelm

thee, as to efface them for the time altogether from thy mind. It is essential that thou take all means to ensure thy calm and security in that dread hour, in order that nought at least shall be left undone on thy part, to make thy revelation perfect; and wert thou to trust to thine unassisted recollection, it could scarce fail but that amid thy trembling and thy shame, the failing of thy heart and struggling of thy soul, thou wouldest be distracted with a thousand fears, that half the sins thou hadst desired to tell were now forgotten, and in the effort to recall them, thou wouldest pass from confusion to bewilderment, till haply in thy fear of sacrilege by incomplete confession, thou come to dread the very absolution which should be thy chiefest joy. Moreover, even in thy preparation, thou wouldest in passing from one period to another find each new sin arising on the mind obliterate still the last, unless thou fix them on the written page where thou shalt ever find them full and clear, and so mayest pass with undivided thoughts to each fresh subject as it starts on view.

In commencing this record, it were best to set down at once such sins as are most glaringly before thine eyes, into which thou hast no need to search, so plainly dost thou see and feel their guilt, and whose very weight intolerable has been perhaps the goad that drove thee to this

confession;—in recording these, as well as in the case of every other sin thou dost confess, it is well to mention the circumstances that may have engendered it, with its after results, if they have led thee on to evil, so that its depth and aggravation may be fully known. Mention also whether the sins were committed in childhood or mature years—whether thou wert fully aware of their heinousness, or if they were done in ignorance,—whether it were a wilful, premeditated sin, or one of surprise and impulse—whether thou wert alone in the commission of it, or instigated by some other, and in a word all such details concerning it as shall the better convey the truth of its nature and extent to thy spiritual father. In so doing thou wilt often have occasion to mention others, and it is a fixed rule in confession that we give not the names of the persons of whom we speak, especially if they are in any way implicated in our guilt—unless in cases, where the nature of the relation in which the person in question stands to us, is an aggravation to our own misdeeds; as for instance in the case of a sin against a parent, which is worse than that against one, to whom we owe no special reverence or honour, or if we have led any into evil whom we were set to guard, in these cases the law of charity which forbids in general that we tell the faults of others, must give

way to the necessity of perfect openness in confession.

In writing down thy sins let thy language be plain and sober, avoid all extenuation of thy guilt as thou wouldest the very touch of fire—all expressions of thy mere feelings not involved in sin—especially expressions of regret or penitence, lest unwittingly thou seek to excite compassion. Let no false delicacy hinder thee from calling thine offences by their rightful names, though bitter shame may fill thee, at the words thou art compelled to utter, and take heed on the other hand, that in thy self-abhorrence, thou exaggerate them not untruly—be it thy sole object in the language thou dost choose, to convey the truth of thy sins, and of them alone unto thy spiritual father. When thou hast carefully noted all those salient offences which seem to lie uppermost on thy conscience ready as it were to start forth from it unbidden, then shalt thou proceed to search out those which still remain deep buried in the past. This must be done by questioning thyself as to thy life and conversation, by the rule of GOD'S commandments, as the Church herself points out thee in the exhortation before the Holy Sacran

Thou knowest that He who came not to de the law but to fulfil it, hath extended the sen the Sacred Decalogue, for us, to an obliga

perfect obedience, in the spirit as well as in the letter. And for this reason there is not a sin His children can commit, which may not be found in the breach of one or the other of these commandments. We therefore give thee in the following Chapter a list of questions on each one of these Holy Laws, by which we trust thou mayest be enabled to sound the depths of even thy most hidden guilt;—nor wilt thou think that we have too widely stretched their limits, in embracing many sins that at first sight seem not to belong to them, if thou rememberest with what an awful strictness our most Blessed LORD Himself explains the sixth and seventh commandments to us, and that in part alone.

We have endeavoured, so far as in us lay, to consider the diversities of age and position, with the special temptations incidental to them, but forasmuch as it is impossible in the endless variety to provide for every case which may occur, we do most earnestly beseech thee not to rest content with this form of self-examination only, but to use it rather as a text on which to enlarge according to thy necessities.

Thou wilt do well, except thou be pressed for time, to take but one commandment in each day, concentrating upon it thy whole energies of thought and memory, until thou hast sought out every possible breach of it which thou canst re-

collect in thy whole life. In order to do this thoroughly thou must seek an answer to each question on it, from the first dawn of recollection up to the actual present,—and when thou hast sought out every offence against this special law which thou canst possibly find, then close the record of it altogether, and go on the day following to the next commandment. By this systematic mode of procedure, thou wilt find the difficulty of thy work in no small measure cleared away, and its magnitude will diminish wonderfully ere thou art well aware of it.

Thou wilt find at the very outset probably that some of the sins which these questions recall unto thee, have engendered many others of a different kind, but in such a case it were ever best, that thou narrate the whole train at once with the circumstances which induced them, so that their nature and aggravations may be thoroughly understood; and fret not thyself, if thus they come not in their order according as we have placed the questions under the head of each commandment, for we have only proposed this arrangement to facilitate thy work, and forasmuch as thy one object is to declare thine offences in the fullest manner and with the least confusion, it matters nothing in what order thou dost number them, provided thou dost but attain this end.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Self-examination by the Commandments.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.

THE first commandment is in actual fact the essence and concentration of all the rest gathered into one,—a breach of any of the others involves a sin against the first, for whensoever a man hath preferred his own will, or the will of Satan to that of GOD Most High, he hath broken this awful Law, "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me."

But seeing that we have in the other nine, a Divine classification of that treason against the Almighty King, which is otherwise called sin,—we do not in our self-examination heap up the record of our offences on this one commandment only, but define them according to their nature as stated in those which follow. Thus it often happens that there is least to state concerning this great

Law, which nevertheless we too surely breal
day, if not each hour of our lives.

Some there are, however, which especiall
long to it, and these we now proceed to stat

Consider then that the GOD Whom tho
here commanded to acknowledge, is that Go
only True, Who hath been made known to
first in the Revelation of GOD the FATHER
Elder Israel,—secondly, in the Incarnati
our LORD JESUS CHRIST,—thirdly, as a
present time by the Church which is animate
interpenetrated by the HOLY SPIRIT, the
Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity.

The right observance of this Law, the
involves an unquestioning faith in all that
after this manner hath revealed concerning
self, and a perfect obedience to that visible
in which He hath willed to clothe His autho

Examine thyself therefore upon it as follo

Hast thou ever sinned by scepticism in any
whatsoever?

Hast thou ever had any doubts concerning the
of Revelation? Or its interpretation by the C
as contained in the Creeds?

If Satan has suggested any such to thee, thyse
consenting thereunto,—hast thou failed to have i
recourse to prayer, and all possible means of re
him?

Hast thou voluntarily let them rest in thy mind, or indulged in the thought of them?

Hast thou ever questioned the Wisdom, Justice, or Mercy of GOD in any of His dealings, as made known by Holy Scripture?

Hast thou secretly thought any record therein given of Him beneath the dignity of the Eternal GOD?

Or hast thou ever had any wrong thought of Him in respect to His dealings with thyself or others—or the state of the world generally?—or thought Him unjust and unkind?

Hast thou ever rashly spoken of thy doubt to any except thy spiritual guide, so as to endanger the faith of others?

Hast thou presumed to search curiously into those awful mysteries, the deep things of GOD, which none may know, save the SPIRIT of GOD which is in Him?—such as the nature of the Unity in Trinity—the Incarnation—or the actual manner of the LORD'S Presence in the Holy Elements,—thus falling into the temptation of our first parents, when they would have made themselves as gods through forbidden knowledge?

Hast thou attempted to judge or define these Divine mysteries by human reason?

Hast thou ever talked on such awful subjects except in receiving or giving instruction?

Hast thou ever consorted with persons of unsound faith, whether their tendency were to infidelity or heresy, thus placing thyself in temptation?

Hast thou ever cherished any intimacy v
unless for the purpose of reclaiming them
only if so advised by a spiritual guide?

Hast thou ever wilfully listened to any co
of infidel or heretical tendency?

Hast thou joined in any such discourse, o
reprove it—by word, if it proceeded from th
or equals,—by a silence easily understood, if
superiors?

Hast thou ever read any books of a like
even if they be accredited by the world?—
done so from human respect, lest thou b
ignorant without a knowledge of them?

If thou hast unwillingly heard any infidel c
opinions; hast thou indulged in the thought
and not struggled against them?

Hast thou ever suggested any sceptical
others, or encouraged them in any?

Hast thou imprudently repeated any such,
out evil intention, or lent books of that desc
in any way propagated them?

Hast thou ever despaired of GOD'S merc
sumed on it—or doubted His love for thee?

Hast thou ever had any such thoughts wl
His chastisement, by sorrow, pain, or sufferi
or mental?

Hast thou told them to others (always exc
spiritual father), so as to infect them pos
like imaginations?

Hast thou spoken of the evils that are in

without humble submission to the certain wisdom and justice of GOD, and so engendered doubts of them?

Hast thou neglected to instruct thyself in the Christian Faith, the Sacraments, ordinances, and requirements of the Church?

Hast thou remained in wilful ignorance on any of these points, or in obstinate error?

If brought up in separation from the Church, hast thou delayed to receive Baptism?

Or if baptized, and afterwards separated, hast thou deferred to be reconciled to the Church?

Hast thou ever joined in any schismatical worship whatsoever? especially communicating with separatists?

Hast thou encouraged others in the sin of schism—or omitted to do thy utmost to win them to the Church?

Hast thou ever feared man more than GOD, and neglected in any way whatsoever, by word or deed, to make a true confession of thy faith and of thy obedience to Him and to the Church, lest thou should be blamed or ridiculed?

Hast thou ever lived as if there were no GOD, following thy own will, and seeking not to serve Him?—if so, for how long a period?

Hast thou ever been forgetful of His Providence, and acted as if events came to pass without Him or as if thou couldest exist without His Help and Blessing?

Hast thou sinned by ingratitude to GOD? whether in respect to Blessings Spiritual or Temporal, and above

all for His Love and Mercy in the Redemption of —and the Sacraments and privileges of the Churc

Hast thou also forgotten that thou owest all ea good to Him, such as the love of friends, the c Priests, health, food, clothing, a roof to shelter and much more beside?

Hast thou omitted day by day to make thine ing of thanksgiving for these and all other blessing

Hast thou not striven to have GOD in thy thou nor to remember His sleepless eye upon thee, an account thou hast to give in the awful judgment?

Hast thou not sought to love GOD with all thy m and to fear Him with awe and reverence, nor p unceasingly for grace to do so?

Hast thou not striven to look with longing fo second coming of thy LORD, and to love His appea bearing it ever in thy mind, and hastening ther as the dawn of thy true life, and only real joy?

Hast thou not been jealous for GOD'S honour, desirous in thy whole life and conversation to pro His glory?

Hast thou desired to know things to come whic had not revealed to thee, and for this end, emp fortune-tellers or any other superstitious invention

Hast thou ever thought or said that thou didst sufficiently desire the Presence of GOD eternall give up thine ease in life in order to obtain it?

If thy conscience accuse thee of any of these ask thyself also, whether thou hast implicated other in them?

How often thou hast committed them, saying, if the number be countless, over what period or periods of time they have extended, or at what age they were committed—state also if thou hast made any special resolutions against these sins, as thy guilt is thereby aggravated.

SECOND COMMANDMENT.

The Second Commandment enjoins upon us the worship of GOD in Spirit and in Truth. We have, therefore, under this head, to examine ourselves, as to the manner in which we have performed our religious duties of every kind whatsoever, and also whether we have set up any idols in our hearts, which we have preferred before Him. Ask thyself, therefore, thus on this comprehensive law :—

Hast thou ever loved aught more than GOD, either of living beings, or of the treasures of this world ?

Test thyself on these points by asking :—

Hast thou ever indulged thy human affections at the expense of thy soul's welfare ?

Hast thou chosen as objects of thy love, any who loved not thy LORD ?

Hast thou devoted thyself, thy life, time, powers, or any undue portion of them, to a human being rather than to GOD ?

Hast thou neglected to adopt any mode of life whereby thou mightest have better served thy GOD, in

order to enjoy the society of those thou lovest, or for their sakes abandoned or modified any plan of self-devotedness thou hadst formed?

Hast thou refused to part with them, if duty to GOD required thee, or repined at doing so?

Hast thou ever neglected any duty in order to be with them?

Hast thou used any unrighteous means to win their affection, or their society?

Hast thou allowed thy love for them so to engross thee, as to render thee unfit for thy duties?

Especially hast thou let the thought of them distract thee at thy devotions or other religious duties?

Hast thou ever, in any way whatsoever, sought to please them more than thou hast sought to please GOD?

Hast thou, to please them, ever omitted a duty?

Or disobeyed the commands and rules of the Church?

Or abstained from any work of charity?

Or, from any act of self-denial, thou hadst resolved on?

If they have differed from thee in religious opinion, hast thou given up on any point whatever, thy faith or practice in order to agree with them?

Hast thou appeared to agree with them, when thou knewest them to be in error?

Hast thou expended thy substance, or an undue portion of it, on them, to the hurt of GOD'S poor, and the cause of His Church?

If GOD has taken them from thee by death, or ab-

sence, or afflicted them with sickness or sorrow, hast thou failed in cheerful compliance with His holy Will, and given way to words and feelings of rebellion, or to unchristian sorrow?

Hast thou, from tenderness to them, failed to admonish them of any thing that was in them displeasing unto GOD?

Hast thou cared more for their bodily comfort or health, than for their soul's good?

Hast thou failed to love them only in the LORD, and to act towards them always with special reference to the eternity awaiting thyself and them?

Hast thou ever desired to attain Heaven in order to be with them, rather than to be with thy Blessed LORD?

If they have died, hast thou desired to die, and been ready to shorten thy life by reckless disregard of it?

Hast thou impiously thought thou wouldest rather have hell with them, than heaven without them?

Hast thou given an undue share of thy devotions solely to prayer for them, especially at the Blessed Sacrament?

Hast thou ever shortened or hurried any such for their society?

Hast thou allowed their love to lead thee into any sin whatsoever, especially any impure or unholy passion?

Selfishness—which has made thee desire to have exclusive enjoyment of their society?

Jealousy, with all the deadly ills that spring from it?

Untruth—defending them falsely if thou hast heard them accused?

Dishonesty, and such like?

If thou be engaged in any office in the Church, ask thyself particularly whether thy human affections have ever interfered with thy entire devotedness to thy sacred calling, and if thou hast expended on them aught of thy time, strength, powers, and substance, which were not thine to give? also if thou hast ever brought scandal on the Church, either in thine own person, or in that of those thou lovest, by giving them undue licence in any way?

Having thus tested if thou hast made to thyself any human idols, see also if thou hast created them out of any of this world's gifts?

Hast thou ever had any ambition, except that one which alone is pure, to serve and please thy GOD—such as for—

Fame—literary or otherwise?

Greatness in the eyes of men, whether by

Rank?—

Riches?—

Station?—or by

Reflection from the greatness of those related to thee; or has thine ambition been for thine

Advancement in life?

For a settled prosperity?

For publicity of any kind?—or has it been

To rise over others?

To attain to mere human knowledge, with no distinct view to GOD's glory?

To shine in society? whether by beauty? accomplishments? wit, or otherwise? or,

To excel others on any of these points? or,

Hast thou made to thyself an idol of mere human gratifications and happiness?

Of luxury?

Of bodily ease? or comfort?

Of art and intellectual enjoyment? above all, of

Riches? so as to incur the guilt of covetousness, which is idolatry.

The very desire of any of these things, except to use them for the glory of GOD, involves sin. Prove thyself therefore further on this point, by examining whether thou hast made the pursuit of any of these the sole or chief aim and object of thy life? instead of seeking out a means whereby thou mightest serve GOD?

Hast thou made any of them thy main occupation, and devoted to them thy time—life—health—powers—and substance?

Have they so engrossed thee that thou hast cared nothing for the glory of GOD, or the good of thy neighbour, and done no work for them, either of such as were evidently set before thee, or of such as thou mightest have found to do, hadst thou sought for them?

Have they so filled thy heart that thou hast made little or no effort to increase in the love of GOD, or to grow in the likeness of CHRIST?

Hast thou sought to attain them by any unrighteous means whatsoever? especially,

Hast thou sought popularity by conforming to the

infidelity, luxury, laxity, or worldliness of o
and so denied the LORD Who bought thee? Tes
see also,

Into what other sins these desires have led thee?
are the very essence of selfishness, and therefore
certain thou wilt find, that thou hast sacrificed to
the ease and comfort of others, in many ways, b
thine own duties towards thy neighbour. Whe
thou canst remember instances of this, record
specially, besides accusing thyself, of the sin i
abstract.

Inquire especially if thou hast neglected an
ligious duties for them, or performed them carel
or neglected the seasons specially appointed for th

If at any time GOD hath warned thee to gi
these vain desires and turn to His service—eith
the promptings of thy conscience, or the advi
others, hast thou resisted Him? or, having beg
amend, hast thou returned to thy former sins?

Hast thou involved any others in thine ambitio
so prevented them labouring in the service of Go

Having examined thyself as to the idols thou m
have set up in thine heart, proceed to try thyself
cerning the worship of GOD in Spirit and in Tr
with soul and with body.

The true worship of GOD generally, does in
consist in the dedication of the whole being to H
through an union with His Well-beloved So
Whom we are joined by the Sacraments of the Ch
but forasmuch as all the Commandments test this

ship in the abstract, we have now to consider those religious duties which are more particularly classed under that name. This actual worship of GOD may therefore be primarily divided under three heads, viz.:—

1st. The Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, which is the highest offering of worship we can make.

2nd. The public worship of the Church.

3rd. Our private devotions.

First, then, with respect to the Blessed Sacrament—if thou hast not been confirmed, and consequently hast never received It—ask thyself,

Hast thou, by thine own negligence, delayed the period of Confirmation, and subsequent Communion? If so,

Hast thou delayed from unwillingness to lead a stricter life?

Or because thou wouldest not give up some special sin?

Or because absorbed in the pleasures of the world?

Or to please any thou didst love?

Or from false shame and fear of ridicule?

Or from contempt of this holy ordinance, and indifference towards it?

Or from having neglected to inform thyself concerning it?

Or from erroneous views of it, which no member of the Church is justified in holding?

Whether or not there has been any delay to thy Confirmation, ask thyself whether thou hast been without desire for the Blessed Sacrament, which ought

to be the object of chiefest longing in every baptized person?

Hast thou been indifferent to It, hast thou thought little or nothing of It?

Has thine indifference sprung from any of the reasons asked above, with respect to delay in Confirmation, especially with regard to erroneous views of It?

Hast thou not discerned the LORD'S Body, and so been careless of receiving? or, on the other hand, hast thou permitted thyself to remain in the popular error, that any sin committed after It was damning, through lack of will to learn the truth?

If thou art confirmed, ask thyself strictly as to the manner in which thou hast received the gift of Confirmation, before proceeding further.

Wert thou confirmed simply, as a matter of custom, or of obedience to those set over thee; and without on thine own part, having any humble desire for the great Gift of the HOLY GHOST therein conveyed?

Or was it done in order to please any thou didst desire to propitiate?

Hast thou failed to make a suitable preparation for Confirmation?

If assisted therein by a Priest or others, hast thou not followed their rules, nor attended to their instructions?

If unassisted, as too frequently happens, hast thou failed to seek every possible means for becoming acquainted with the nature of this sacred ordinance, and the right preparation for it?

In either case, hast thou not striven to prepare thy-

self, by rigid self-examination, by prayer, and retirement from the world for a season?

Hast thou gone to be Confirmed in ignorance or error respecting it—any degree of which is censurable, as the means of information respecting it are open to all?

Especially hast thou erred by the common belief that Confirmation is the confirming *by* thee, of thy Baptismal vows, and not the confirming *in* thee, by GOD Himself, of the HOLY GHOST received in Baptism, so that thou hast in consequence received with carelessness or indifference, or without recognition, the Sacred gift bestowed, in the laying on of hands?

Hast thou gone to be confirmed, without a solemn purpose of dedicating thyself afresh to the service of GOD, Who therein seals thee as His own? and without special supplication that thou shouldst not receive the grace in vain?

Recall the circumstances of the season and actual day of thy Confirmation, that thou mayest judge after what manner thou hast received that holy rite.

Previously to it, hast thou let thyself be engaged in worldly matters, so that thy thoughts were distracted from it—or joined in frivolous conversations, or frequented scenes, which distracted thy mind from so solemn a purpose?

Hast thou, either before or during the rite, made it in any degree a subject of vanity, by thinking of thy dress and appearance, and of the eye of men upon thee?

Hast thou sought and desired the admiration of

those present, and made thy dress or appearance a subject of conversation, leading others into the same sin?

Hast thou failed to present thyself with true repentance, faith, and earnest purpose of amendment of life?

On the day of Confirmation, was the previous time spent frivolously, and didst thou occupy thyself with the attendant circumstances, instead of the rite itself?

In Church, before the service began, didst thou look around instead of praying, and after it commenced didst thou fail to join with attention, fervour, and humility?

Didst thou not give reverent heed to the Bishop's instructions, as to the anointed of CHRIST, and when he asked thee if thou didst acknowledge thyself bound to keep thy Baptismal Vow, in order to judge of thy fitness for the gift of Confirmation, didst thou not make thine affirmative with perfect sincerity, and deep solemnity, remembering it would be recorded in the Book of Judgment?

Didst thou fail at the same time earnestly to implore help to live according to thy Baptismal profession, and on going to kneel before the Bishop, hast thou not sought to fix thy mind on the fact that GOD the HOLY GHOST was Himself coming to thee in a peculiar manner?

Didst thou think at that moment of being seen of men, or were thy thoughts distracted in any other way?

When actually receiving the Imposition of Hands, didst thou fail to consider the greatness of the gift therein conveyed?

Didst thou fail in showing reverence in thine attitude,

as befitted such an occasion, and on the other hand, didst thou find means of vanity in the consciousness that thy reverential posture was noticed?

After Confirmation didst thou fail to make due thanksgiving to GOD for His so great mercy, or spent the remainder of the day in forgetfulness of it, and in a frivolous manner?

Hast thou either before or after Confirmation, deterred any others by word or example from being confirmed, or from receiving the Blessed Sacrament?

Hast thou thyself after Confirmation, delayed making thy first Communion?

Since then, hast thou ever neglected any opportunity of receiving the Blessed Sacrament, except by advice of thy spiritual guide, or for some approved reason?

If so, didst thou abstain because of any sin thou wouldest not abandon? or generally from unwillingness to meet all the requirements of a holy life? or,

From false shame and fear of ridicule? or because thou hast yielded to the sinful dread and common mistake that we are thereby called to a stricter life, (whereas nothing can make the obligation of Baptism either less or greater)?

Examine thyself as to thy preparation for thy first Communion, and all subsequent Communions:—

Was there any degree of carelessness or indifference in it?

Didst thou fail anxiously to use every means to know and understand, so far as we may or ought, the truth of this Holy Mystery?

Didst thou not seek, with self-denial and care, to prepare thyself, nor labour earnestly for that faith and repentance which are required of them who come to the Altar of the LORD?

Didst thou go without being in perfect charity with all men?

Didst thou not duly examine thyself according to the rule of the Church? or, if unable by thine own efforts to quiet thy conscience, as few in earnest could, didst thou refrain from going according to the will of the Church, to open thy grief to a Priest, and receive the benefit of Absolution?

Didst thou not communicate fasting, which thou oughtest to have done, except it were certified it would injure thy health?

Hast thou ever received with sin unrepented? or

Hypocritically? or

For the sake of thy worldly interest?

Hast thou any reason to think thou hast ever committed the grievous sin of communicating without discerning the LORD'S Body, and counted the Sacred Elements to be only that which they appeared to the outward sense? or received It as a mere remembrance?

Hast thou, for this cause, at the Consecration, failed to recognize the actual Presence of the LORD, and to make an act of worship inwardly, whilst outwardly the body was maintained in a posture of reverential awe?

Hast thou failed to join in the sacrifice therein offered

by the Great High Priest, through the agency of His earthly representative?

Hast thou received with inattention, wandering of thoughts, or carelessness?

Hast thou let thine attention be distracted by the presence of any thou lovedst, or didst not love?

Hast thou looked round at the persons present, noticing their manner or proceedings?

Hast thou in any way failed in reverence, especially at the very altar—if obliged to wait, remaining standing, or permitting thine eyes to wander and thy thoughts to turn to any subject save that awful Presence? and at the moment of receiving, forgetting that it was His Very Body and His Very Blood?

Hast thou, on the other hand, sinned by thinking that the Clergy or others, would see and admire thy reverence, and found occasion of vanity in thy devout manner, or in any way thought of the eyes of man upon thee?

Has this thought induced a devout manner in thee when it should have been produced by the glorious Presence only?

On retiring from the Altar, hast thou failed to remain bowed in deep thanksgiving, or to continue giving thanks many days after?

Hast thou been deterred from any outward reverence by fear of ridicule or displeasure in others?

Hast thou ever received the Blessed Sacrament to please others, and not as thine own glad service? or,

In order to be with any thou didst love? or,

In order to receive from any particular Priest?

Hast thou ever permitted thyself to think with preference of one officiating Priest rather than another, from personal feeling towards them, and not as alone thou mightest innocently, from their greater reverence to the LORD'S Body?

Hast thou been conscious of pleasure in receiving from any particular Priest?

On the other hand, hast thou permitted any feeling of dislike to the Priest to prevent thee communicating?

Hast thou abstained because thy religious scruples made it impossible for thee to go without confession, and from that thou hast shrunk?

Hast thou ever, whether as a Communicant or not, said or written anything against the Blessed Sacrament in any way whatsoever? sceptically as to the LORD'S Presence, or depreciatingly—or denying this truth—that it is an absolute and perpetual necessity to the soul? or hast thou ever failed to speak of it with the utmost reverence as our chiefest blessing?

Hast thou caused others to think lightly of it, by thy words, or thine example, if thou wert negligent of it?

Hast thou ever abstained from care of thy bodily health, when not absolutely necessary?

For the sake of any pleasure?

Because any amusement or business prevented thy making due preparation for it?

From indolence?

Dread of suffering fatigue, cold, or inconvenience?

In order to avoid giving offence? or from

The dread of ridicule, and any insufficient reason whatever?

Hast thou ever found occasion of vanity in thy frequent Communions? or in any self-denial connected with them?

Hast thou wilfully chosen a residence, where the opportunity of frequent Communion was not afforded thee?

Examine thyself next as to the public worship in the Church. Hast thou ever neglected any opportunity of joining in it, when it was within thy reach? at daily morning and evening prayer if this were in thy power? if not on all holy days?—or if even this were not attainable, on Sundays, and every other possible occasion?

If thou hast ever absented thyself from Church, when thou mightest have gone, state the reason—whether it were

Indifference?

Distaste?

Indolence?

Love of pleasure or ease?

Dread of fatigue or suffering?

Self-indulgence of any kind whatever? or any of the reasons already asked respecting absence from the Holy Sacrament, which we therefore need not recapitulate?

Hast thou ever absented thyself from dislike to the manner in which the service was performed? or to any of the officiating clergy?

On the other hand, hast thou ever joined in a religious service from any motive but the one alone pure of praising and worshipping GOD?

Hast thou ever gone for the sake of meeting any one?

Or from personal feeling towards any of the clergy?

Or hypocritically?

To win favour from others?

To further thy worldly interest?

For the sake of accompanying others?

To hear fine music as a mere idle gratification?

To pass unoccupied time?

To appear respectable and devout?

As a matter of custom?

For the sake of the sermon, and not for the offering of praise and intercession by the Church?

When in Church, hast thou failed to join in all parts of the service?

To make the responses?

To sing or chant, if it was in thy power?

Reverently to *kneel* when it was so commanded? or to stand at the proper time?

To bow at the holy Name of JESUS, and to join in any other reverent practice of a like nature?

Hast thou ever laughed or whispered in church? or

Drawn the attention of others to peculiarities in the clergy or arrangements of the services? or in any way, disturbed their devotions?

Hast thou suffered thine eyes to wander? looking at others, noticing their dress, or peculiarities of devotion,

judging them possibly for inattention when thou wast in the same fault thyself? or,

Hast thou suffered thy thoughts to wander.

Hast thou employed them on worldly things, or in vain day-dreaming, of which the foundation is ever self-love, or on anything in the lessons which might induce improper thoughts?

Hast thou ever manifested ill-feeling, or made any sort of disturbance in the Church? choosing to retain some special seat and such like? or giving way to any slight feeling of illness and going out when thou mightest have remained? or by coming in late?

Hast thou wished the service over, or openly manifested fatigue or weariness?

Hast thou shown any signs of disapprobation of the preacher? or failed to attend with reverence and attention to his instruction?

After leaving the church, hast thou spoken lightly or scoffingly of any reverential observances therein practised?

Or criticized the sermon? or spoken against it? or

Spoken of the persons present, their dress, appearance, and devotional practices?

Hast thou ever, without absolute necessity, deterred any other from going to church, especially servants or persons under thy control?

Hast thou failed to make special thanksgiving for the privilege of serving God daily, or on holy days, or for frequent communion, according as they have been vouchsafed to thee?

Hast thou found occasion for vanity in thy frequent attendance? Strive to state, so far as thou canst, how often these various sins have been committed.

Examine thyself next as to private devotions.

Hast thou ever neglected morning and evening prayer?

Also at noon, or some other time of the day?

At the seven canonical hours if the privilege of keeping them is known to thee?

State the reasons of thy neglect—whether carelessness?

Indolence?

Late rising?

Dissipated hours at night?

Pleasure and amusement?

Worldly business, or any favourite occupation?

Forgetfulness, or false shame, if unavoidably in the presence of others? or,

From distaste to prayer?

Hast thou wished thou couldest avoid saying them?

Hast thou ever shortened or hurried them, for the above or any other reasons?

Hast thou prayed with inattention and wandering of thought? with coldness or carelessness?

With irreverence either in body or soul?

Speaking rashly or without due consideration to the awful GOD?

Presumptuously or despairingly?

Complainingly or resentfully if in suffering?

Or hast thou ever maintained any irreverent posture

of body, such as thou wouldest not have done, had human eye been upon thee, or been otherwise careless?

Speaking or laughing whilst engaged in prayer? interrupting them? using thy hands for any other purpose, and such like?

Hast thou ever disturbed any other at their devotions?

Hast thou failed to pray on entering or leaving a church?

To give thanks before and after meals?

After a safe journey? or,

Recovery from sickness of thyself or others?

Preservation from danger or any other special blessing?

Besides thine ordinary devotions, hast thou ever failed after falling into sin, at once to make an act of confession to GOD and implore forgiveness?

Hast thou failed to practise constant intercession for the Church—also for the Bishop of the diocese, and for the Priest to whose care thou art committed—also for the Queen, and those in authority, and for all men, especially such as are without the Fold of the Church, or who in It are forgetful of their LORD—all who are in suffering, mental or bodily—any who have injured thee or whom thou hast injured—all who have befriended thee, and whom GOD hath linked to thee by ties of blood?

If thou hast been called upon to join in prayer in a household, hast thou failed in attention, devotion, and reverence, and scoffed or smiled at any peculiarity in the manner of worship?

Hast thou neglected self-examination daily state the reason, whether from indolence, indifl and such like?

Hast thou neglected the study of Holy Script (under due guidance), and the reading of dev books?

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

The Third Commandment forbids, not only all kinds of swearing and profane language, but also every sort of light or irreverent dealing with any holy thing. Examine thyself therefore first whether—

Thou hast ever used any oaths or profane words?

Hast thou ever taken any vow impossible to be performed, or without consulting a Priest? or,

Broken any vow? or,

Delayed its fulfilment?

Hast thou ever used any sacred name or word, except for some proper purpose with seriousness and reverence? as for instance, in ordinary conversation, or by an exclamation in a foreign language, saying, "Mon Dieu!" or in singing, except sacred music, saying, "Oh Dio," and such like? or hast thou ever used such expressions as "Good Heavens," and others, all which are forbidden by our Blessed LORD?

Hast thou ever introduced any sacred name or word into a jest? or repeated any such?

Hast thou ever spoken of Holy Scripture with irreverence?

Or made a jest of any part of it?

Hast thou ever read it without reverence, and a prayer for grace to use it properly? or for any other purpose but the right one? such as

For amusement? or,

To gratify an improper curiosity by looking at portions which might suggest impure thoughts?

Hast thou ever spoken jestingly or lightly, of any thing connected with a church or religious services?

Hast thou presumed to exercise private judgment on any ceremonial, which is according to the direction of the Prayer Book?

Hast thou spoken lightly or scoffingly of any devotional practices in others?

When laxity, or mistakes in the service, or peculiarities of the officiating clergy have tended to produce ridiculous ideas, hast thou failed in endeavouring not to indulge them, and especially not to express them to others?

Hast thou ever spoken lightly or irreverently of a Priest, or a person appointed to any holy function whatever?

Hast thou ever in any way mocked them or turned them into ridicule? or,

Depreciated them? or,

Joined and encouraged others in any such things?

Especially hast thou spoken lightly of the Sacraments and talked of any outward circumstances connected with them, which induces irreverence in thought?

Hast thou considered a Baptism, as a mere occasion of festivity without respect to its awful nature?

Hast thou failed to check and reprove others they have done so?

Hast thou ever spoken in any way doubtingl sumptuously, or irreverently of the Sacrament Lord's Body and Blood?

Hast thou ever acted or spoken irreverently empty church, or in one which, though ruine still the consecrated House of God—specially o occasions hast thou touched the altar or any hol connected with it?

Hast thou ever spoken against fasting, or any Church's rules, or scoffed at those who practised and deterred any from doing so?

Hast thou ever scoffed at, or spoken ill of th ordinance of confession, or prevented any from us

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

The Fourth Commandment is binding c Christian in a far wider sense than on th but somewhat after a different manner. Th of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath, and H not only changed the day of Rest into the F of His own Resurrection, of the Rising Light of the world from the tomb, on the day when the light of nature dawned at His Cr Word, and which is the anniversary of the Fir of the New Creation, but He hath likewi tended the consecration of days unto Himself those, which, through the Church, He pron

eth to be holy. We have the voice of the Church in her Catechism, and there she interprets this command, as enjoining us "to serve GOD truly *all* the days of our life." Having however already given questions respecting the *daily* worship of GOD, thou needest now only to examine thyself concerning all holy days and seasons specially appointed by the Church.

First then as to Sunday or the Weekly Festival of the Resurrection.

Hast thou ever failed, except of necessity, to receive the blessed Sacrament on that day, and to attend all the appointed services? if so, state the reasons, according to the questions already given for neglect of religious duties.

Hast thou ever on that day bought or sold? or

Worked at any secular matter?

Conducted any worldly business?

Spent the day in intemperance?

Idleness?

Revelling?

Frivolous conversation or mere amusement?

Hast thou used it for reading newspapers or light books, writing letters, visiting, or any other mere pastime, for which week-day business leaves no leisure?

Hast thou failed to watch that thy servants, dependents, or children duly observed the Sundays and other holy days?

Hast thou omitted to use the leisure from business which the Sunday affords thee, in works of mercy, or in acquiring a knowledge of religion?

Hast thou ever failed, except of necessity, to keep the other Fasts and Festivals of the Church? Examine thyself upon them separately—take first the greatest Fast,

Good Friday—Hast thou failed to keep this as a day of complete retirement, self-denial, and penitential mourning, for thy sins which crucified the LORD of Glory?

Hast thou on that day fasted, by abstaining actually from food, to the extent permitted by thy health? if not, state the reasons of thy neglect—whether simply

Self-indulgence? or,

Yielding weakly to the wishes of others? or,

Fear of rebuke or ridicule?

Hast thou failed on that day, to pass the time not spent in Church, in private devotion and contemplation of thy dying LORD?

Hast thou ever failed to spend the holy season of Lent according to the rule of the Church, in complete retirement from the world,—in self-denial, devotion, and penitential exercises?

Hast thou failed in duly fasting at that season, and hast thou done so without the permission of thy spiritual guide, or the parish priest? if so, state the reasons according to the questions given above.

Hast thou failed duly to observe the Fridays and Rogation Days as days of *abstinence* and retirement?

Hast thou failed to keep the Vigils as Fasts, in which thou art required to contemplate in seclusion from the world, the holy endurance and virtues of the Saints, and to supplicate grace to follow their good examples? and the

Ember Days, as seasons of fasting and special intercession for the Church? also

Advent, as a season of penitence, retirement, and contemplation of the Judgment to come?

Hast thou failed to keep all Festivals with the devotion appropriate to each, carefully attending the Services, and striving to render them profitable to the education of thy soul, according to the mind of the Church? Examine thyself on each separately.

Christmas—Hast thou made it a time chiefly of *earthly* rejoicing, or suffered earthly sorrow to dim thy spiritual joy? These questions apply to all Festivals; further,

Easter—Hast thou chiefly rejoiced to escape the gloom of Lent, or presumed to rejoice in the Feast when thy non-observance of Lent had cut off thy right to do so?

Ascension—Hast thou fallen into the common error of neglecting this Festival (even when the others are observed), which is, in truth, among the greatest?

Whitsuntide—Hast thou failed to make this a time of special thanksgiving, as the birthday of the Church? and of particular invocation of the HOLY GHOST on all who are in the membership of CHRIST'S Body?

Trinity—Hast thou failed to keep it with reverential

adoration of the Triune GOD, and humble meditation on this so great mystery?

All days of commemoration—Hast thou failed to keep them with earnest realization of the Communion of Saints, and with prayer for grace to emulate their holiness, and so attain their rest?

When special days have been appointed, of fast or thanksgiving for deliverance from pestilence or famine, hast thou failed obediently to keep them, or done so only *selfishly* for thy own preservation, with no thought for thy brethren?

Hast thou encouraged any other in similar neglect?

Or been persuaded by them to join in it? or

Joined with them in scoffing at such observance?

Or failed to teach them to any, over whom thou wert set in authority?

FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

The Fifth Commandment involves not only our duty to our parents, but also to all who are set in authority over us, our superiors, whether ecclesiastical or civil, all who are linked to us in ties of blood, all inferiors and dependants—all friends—the poor, and in a word, all whom the Church includes under that comprehensive term, "our neighbours," according to her explanation of this law in her Catechism. Examine thyself therefore, first, as to

[redacted]parents,—

Hast thou ever been disobedient to them? If so, state any particular occasions, and whether it has been openly or secretly?

Hast thou disobeyed their known wishes when not expressed in distinct command? or,

Done anything in their absence which thou wouldst not have dared to do in their presence?

Hast thou ever defied their authority, or refused to acknowledge it? or,

Remained in obstinate rebellion against them?

Hast thou ever obeyed them in anything *unlawful*?

Hast thou failed to take any rebuke from them meekly and submissively, whether it were just or unjust? and any punishment in like manner—or their counsel if they have told thee of thy faults?

Hast thou ever done anything which thou knewest would grieve them? or ever in any way,

Given them pain, distress, or annoyance which thou couldst have avoided?

Hast thou failed in any respect in striving constantly and earnestly to please them and to promote their comfort, giving up for this end thine own will and wishes in all things *lawful*?

Hast thou ever permitted thyself to be angry with them? or sullen? ill-tempered? and irritable?

Hast thou ever spoken to them with harsh, fretful, or impatient words?

Hast thou ever deceived them in any way whatsoever?

Hast thou ever been disrespectful to them in word or act?

Hast thou ever in any way been unkind to them?

Hast thou ever encouraged or permitted any other to be so? or to deceive them? or in any way to behave ill to them?

Hast thou ever laughed at them either openly or secretly? ever

Mocked or ridiculed them? or,

Shown impatience of their infirmities and noticed them?

Hast thou failed to succour them in every possible way?

To devote a part at least of thy worldly means, to their support and comfort?

Hast thou failed to tend them in their sickness, sorrow, or in their old age?

Hast thou in any way spoken against them, complained of them, or revealed their infirmities?

Hast thou wasted their substance, or neglected to use the advantages of education which they procured for thee?

Hast thou imposed on their goodness and indulgence, and so gained much from them?

Hast thou despised them? or disliked them? or spoken of them contemptuously?

Hast thou neglected to pray for them, and to encourage them in the true following of CHRIST?

If they have differed from thee on any point, especially of religion—hast thou disputed arrogantly with them?

Hast thou shown that thou dost consider thyself in any respect their superior? whether for

Learning? Station? Riches or other advantages?

If they have been in manifest error hast thou *besought* them to turn to the truth, after the manner enjoined by the Apostle, when he saith of an elder, "entreat him as a father," and not presumptuously reproved them?

Hast thou failed in gratitude to them, and in acknowledging to them thy great obligations to their care?

Hast thou failed in love and tenderness to them? showing that their society was distasteful to thee? or such like?

Hast thou thought uncharitably of them, and if they have dealt unkindly by thee, hast thou resented it in deed or word, or thought?

If GOD hath taken them from thee by death, hast thou not duly performed their last will and testament, nor paid their debts, nor otherwise respected their memory?

Those questions apply also to grandparents. Examine thyself next as to thy conduct to thy spiritual father, if thou hast placed thyself under the guidance of one especially,

Hast thou failed to be perfectly obedient and submissive to him? or,

Perfectly open? concealing nothing from him concerning thy spiritual condition? Test thyself next by the questions given respecting natural parents; many of which apply alike to him; and then ask thyself further:

Hast thou ever sought to pry into his intercourse with others, who are his children in CHRIST? or

Told him anything concerning them, or influenced him with regard to them in any way? or at least endeavoured to do so?

Hast thou ever felt any dislike to him, or on the other hand, any undue personal affection?

Hast thou permitted any taint of earthly feeling whatever to mingle with this spiritual relation?

Hast thou lowered the sacredness of his person in the eyes of others, by speaking familiarly of him and thy relation towards him?

Hast thou failed to be respectful and deferential to thy parish Priest—upholding his authority, and if thou hast no spiritual father, seeking his advice in cases of spiritual difficulty, and especially if for any reason thou hast feared to receive the blessed Sacrament?

Hast thou ever thwarted his wishes amongst his flock, or interfered in their spiritual welfare without his permission?

Hast thou ever spoken against him or ridiculed him?

Examine thyself next as to any masters, mistresses, teachers, or guardians, whom thou mayest have had, by the question given with respect to parents. Then ask thyself further as to employers or masters.

Hast thou failed to offer them a willing and *honest* service, giving them work to the full value of their money, or other equivalent for it?

Hast thou permitted them to be deceived or illused by others?

Hast thou failed to show them all due honour and respect?

With regard to teachers, hast thou failed to profit by their instructions, to be careful to avoid giving them trouble, and to show them every kindness in thy power?

Hast thou failed, not only to give them personal obedience, but also strictly to adhere to the rules of any school or establishment where thou mayest have been placed? if so, state what rules thou hast broken?

Hast thou instigated or encouraged any others in a like rebellion?

Hast thou failed in gratitude to any of those of whom we have now spoken, or to any who have shown thee kindness or been of service to thee?

Examine thyself as to all others, relations, or persons who have a claim upon thee, in any way, according to the questions already given.

Hast thou failed to strive to make thyself useful and to serve them in every possible way?

Hast thou ever led them to evil by thine example or negligence?

Hast thou ever broken the laws of the land or encouraged and shielded others in doing so?

Hast thou ever spoken evil of the Queen or any "dignities," especially ecclesiastical?

Hast thou failed to give honour where honour is due? i.e., to all superiors? and also to show perfect courtesy to all men, according to the command, "Be courteous?"

If thou hast sinned by any of these means against

those set over thee, state what have been the chief reasons of thy fault, whether—

Pride?

Rebelliousness?

Obstinacy?

Sullenness?

Irritability?

Examine thyself now as to thy brothers and sisters, if GOD hath blessed thee with any.

Hast thou ever quarrelled with them?

Hast thou ever been angry with them justly or unjustly?

Hast thou ever acted unkindly by them in any way?

Hast thou ever struck or injured them?

Hast thou ever excited them to anger, and spoken sharply or hastily to them?

Hast thou ever been the means of having them rebuked or punished?

Hast thou told their faults to others?

Hast thou omitted to share thy possessions with them?

Hast thou failed in love and kindness to them?

Hast thou ever been unjust to them?

If younger than thou art—hast thou treated them harshly and oppressively?

Shown them a bad example?

Been at no pains to lead them aright?

Hast thou neglected them as to their well-being, bodily or mental?

Deprived them of any care or comfort thou couldest bestow?

In sickness or health? and especially,

Of any religious instruction, thou mightest have given them?

Hast thou despised them, or in any way misused them?

If older than thou art, hast thou failed to show them deference?

To give up thy will in all things lawful to theirs?

Hast thou ever had any estrangement from them?

Hast thou ever been jealous or envious of any of them, whether older or younger than thyself?

Hast thou failed to seek their happiness before thine own?

Hast thou in any way deprived them of happiness, or of the love and esteem of others?

Hast thou failed to tend them in sickness? or comfort them in sorrow?

Hast thou ever spoken ill of them? misrepresented them? or complained of them? or,

Defrauded them of their rights?

Hast thou failed to think, speak, and act charitably towards them?

To defend them as much as possible, within the limits of truth, and to seek excuses for any fault in them?

Hast thou failed to pray for them, and by word and example to seek in all things to encourage them in the path of Life Eternal.

Hast thou failed to give them every aid in thy power, at all times and in all ways, personally, and with thy substance, or otherwise?

Hast thou ever thwarted any of their plans, they were unlawful?

If thou hast had any pupils, or persons over thou art set in authority—see if thou hast failed to them, by the above questions; especially see hast been unkind to them, or neglectful of their s welfare?

Examine thyself next as to inferiors, servan dependents of all kinds.

Hast thou treated them with pride or contem

With harshness and injustice?

With severity and want of consideration?

Hast thou been unkind to them in any way soever?

Caused them to work too hard? or to work v and fatigued?

Hast thou prevented them attending the ser the Church, or failed to urge them to do so?

Hast thou not striven with earnestness, tha ever influence thou hast had in the regulation household, should tend to its holiness?

Hast thou failed to take care that thy s should be instructed in the truths of religion, assisted in its practice?

Hast thou been angry with them, especially un

Hast thou ever reproved them except when abs necessary? and then, otherwise than with gen and meekness?

On the other hand, hast thou permitted them main in any sin without reproving them?

If they have committed any fault, hast thou sent them from thee, without caring or providing for their future welfare?

Hast thou failed to tend them when they were ill and in sorrow? and to promote their happiness and well-being in all things?

Hast thou spoken to them sharply and hastily? and found fault with them without cause, or continually?

Hast thou given them unnecessary trouble, and caused thyself to be much waited on?

Hast thou in any way raised them out of their proper station, or treated them in a manner unbecoming to it?

Hast thou failed to pray for them, and to strive in every way to lead them aright?

Examine thyself especially as to the *poor*.

Hast thou failed to count it one of thy chief duties, to attend to them, and thy great privilege?

Hast thou neglected them or cared nothing for them?

Hast thou not sought them out to do them good?

Hast thou refused to hear them, or to examine into their wants?

Hast thou failed to give at the least, a tenth part of thy substance for their necessities, spiritual and temporal?

Hast thou not denied thyself for their sakes?

Hast thou treated them with pride and *disrespect*, and considered less their feelings or convenience, than thou wouldest those of an equal?

Hast thou failed thankfully to give them thy time, thy labour, and thy prayers?

Hast thou in a word, failed to fulfil for them those offices, to which the promise is given at the last of the

ineffable invitation, "Come ye Blessed"? and if tho hadst not money hast thou not given them *love*, a tendance in sickness and sorrow, and such like?

Hast thou not had pity on the *fallen*, especially thine own sex, if the opportunity were afforded thee and striven to win them back to penitence?

Hast thou failed to deal by them with tenderness an humility?

Generally hast thou failed to practise the law charity towards all men, treating every one with lovin kindness and forgetting thine own self to serve them?

SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Our Blessed LORD, hath Himself explained t Sixth Commandment to us, in terms which plain teach us that we break it, not only, by every kin of passion, anger and evil temper, as well as by a hatred, envy, jealousy, and injury to others, b also by many more sins against ourselves an others than we can well enumerate. Examin thyself therefore first on those which are mo glaring.

Hast thou ever done any bodily injury to any o or inflicted any bodily pain upon them?

Hast thou ever, through care for thine own life, for any other reason, failed to save the life of another or to preserve them from injury? and in any way assi them, when it was in thy power to do so?

On the other hand, hast thou ever exposed the life of another without absolute necessity?

Hast thou ever desired the death of any one, or wished them any evil whatsoever?

Hast thou ever prayed that any evil might befall them, or that they might not have their desires? (except these were unlawful.)

Hast thou ever done anything whatever, to cause another pain, sorrow, misfortune, or suffering?

Hast thou by neglect during illness, or in any other way, promoted their death or ill-health?

Hast thou ever desired thine own death, and in any way whatsoever endeavoured to hasten it?

Hast thou ever without just cause, wilfully endangered thy life, or neglected thy health?

Hast thou done so from discontent, or unwillingness to bear the chastisements of GOD?

Hast thou ever committed the crime of *soul murder*, by leading any one into sin?

Instigating them to commit it?

Throwing temptations in their way? or by

Teaching them evil and encouraging them in it?

Hast thou ever sinned against thine own soul, by placing thyself wilfully in temptation, or in the power of those who would lead thee wrong?

Hast thou ever made a mockery or jest of the powers of evil, especially of Satan their prince, and added to their power by making others disbelieve in them, or cease to fear them?

Hast thou ever injured another in any way whatever?

Taking from them their good name? or

Destroying the love of others for them?

Preventing any kindness that would ha
to them?—or such like.

Hast thou been thyself unkind to them

Hast thou failed to assist any when it was i
especially old persons and children and
mind or body, either in matters spiritual or

Hast thou destroyed or injured the hap
other, in any way whatsoever?

Hast thou injured them by ingratitude
manner returned evil for good? or *evil fo*

Hast thou ever hated any person
openly?

Hast thou cherished this wicked feeling
and spoken of it, otherwise than to confess
sin?

If thou canst recollect having hated an
amine thyself strictly as to all thine int
them in particular, and wheresoever th
thyself to have been influenced by this
confess the circumstance as a sin, whethe
thought, word, or deed.

Hast thou failed to strive and to pra
feeling?

Without absolutely hating, hast thou dis
and has this dislike influenced thee in a
ever?

It is not possible that we should feel the
of personal affection for every one, but i

and our bounden duty, that we should treat all men as indeed our brethren beloved in the LORD; see then if by disliking any one thou hast failed in this.

Hast thou omitted to pray for those thou didst dislike? and to do them any good in thy power? denying thyself to that end?

If persons have injured thee—hast thou failed to obey the command, "Love thine enemies." "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you?" Try thyself by these precepts.

Hast thou ever cherished any feeling of revenge?

Hast thou acted upon it in any way whatever?

Hast thou ever complained of, or spoken ill of persons who have injured thee? or tried to make others angry with them?

Hast thou failed to receive an injury of any kind with meekness, patience, and humility?

Hast thou given way to anger at any time? if often, mention the most flagrant instances thou canst recollect.

Has thine anger led thee to any words or acts of violence and injustice?

To quarrelling?

To invective or abusive language?

Hast thou cherished thine anger? and let the sun go down upon thy wrath?

Hast thou ever said the LORD'S Prayer, without forgiving those that trespassed against thee?

Has thine anger caused thee to treat persons unkindly?

Examine thyself as to any evil tempers in which thou mayest have indulged, giving so far as thou canst, an idea to what extent thou hast sinned by them, mentioning special instances—question thyself as to

Irritability? fretfulness?

Sullenness? obstinacy? perversity? and suchlike?

Hast thou ever given way to any of these? if so, state,

For how long a period?

How often?

For what cause?

Towards whom?

Hast thou been angry, if thwarted?

Hast thou been impatient under pain, misfortune, or interruption, in occupation or amusement?

Hast thou indulged in gloom and depression, thereby saddening others?

Hast thou spoken angrily, or fretfully?

Hast thou permitted estrangement to exist between thyself and any other?

Hast thou failed to be on all occasions a peacemaker?

Hast thou thyself caused dispeace in any way?

Hast thou acted, thought, or spoken, uncharitably of any one?

Hast thou treated any one with harshness or severity? especially one in sin, whom thou mightest endeavour to reclaim?

Hast thou been overbearing and oppressive towards any one?

Hast thou ever been jealous of any one? whether

for the love which others bore to them? or for their goodness? talent? or any other favourable circumstance connected with them? if so, examine thyself especially, as to whether thou hast permitted this jealousy to develope itself in any way?

Hast thou sinned by malice, in thought, word, or deed?

Hast thou ever acted spitefully towards any one?

Hast thou spoken with bitterness, when thou wert unforgiving or otherwise out of temper?

Hast thou disputed for thy rights and not rather yielded them, than have a quarrel with thy brother in CHRIST?

Hast thou failed honestly to confess thyself in the wrong?

Hast thou not asked pardon of any one whom thou hast offended or injured (making restitution if possible), and striving earnestly to be reconciled?

Hast thou ever obstinately maintained thou wert in the right, when pride hindered thee from owning thy fault?

Hast thou ever been cruel to any human being or to any animal?

Hast thou ever been actuated by ill-will towards any one?

Hast thou ever called any one by injurious names, such as the "Raca," and "thou fool," of which our blessed LORD speaks?

When thou hast at any time heard of accident, distress, or suffering, hast thou failed instantly to carry

there thy succour in whatever shape thou could
ford it?

Hast thou ever ridiculed any person for thei
mities, bodily or mental?

Hast thou ever treated insane persons or idiot
out kindness and *respect*, as the afflicted of God

Hast thou ever mocked or laughed at any per
any cause whatever, or tormented them for thin
amusement, or that of others?

Hast thou failed to defend others, when thou ha
them ridiculed unjustly, blamed, or otherwise an

Hast thou ever injured any one by thine evil ex
thereby showing them how to sin? or by omit
show them a good example, thus preventing the
learning the path of holiness?

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

The Seventh Commandment is broken n
by any kind of impurity, in thought, w
deed; but by every species of sin of the fles
by indulgence in carnal mindedness of eve
—there are therefore generally more sins
found under this commandment than unc
other—and remember, we pray thee, that
a *false* shame utterly misplaced at the trib
Penitence, even as of necessity, it will be
awful Bar of Judgment, if thou wert to
from confessing, openly and honestly, s

against purity and modesty. If thou wert not ashamed to *commit* them before the Eyes of the GOD all Pure, it were indeed a mockery at which the very tempter would exult, if thou wert to profess thyself too modest, to repeat them to a mortal of like passions with thyself—tremble rather, at so much as the thought of keeping those vile sins, another instant, clinging as a leprous taint unto thy soul, where the very Immaculate SON of GOD Himself awaits an entrance in the Blessed Sacrament—and although (GOD be praised) persons in that rank of society for which this Manual is chiefly destined, are mostly guarded from the very knowledge of the more flagrant sins of this nature, yet we believe there is not one, however young, who has altogether escaped contracting some taint, at least in thought, from the contact of this polluting world—and from the suggestions of the evil one, operating on the lurking corruption of the flesh. If then thou canst with humble thankfulness for thy preservation, abstain from so much as questioning thyself on the hateful sins, so plainly forbidden by this Commandment and our LORD'S explanation of it, that we need not specify them in our questions, it can scarce fail but that some of those we have given, on many other forms of self-indulgence, shall strike home to thy conscience with a certain aim.—Ask thyself first however re-

specting the various shades of imp
the temptation to which, no class o
altogether exempt. And remember, t
most earnest heed that our cautious
graver offences, engender not in thee
carelessness respecting them—with
verity must thou try and condemn th
have been in thee any sin against
word, or deed, and when this has bee
cessary then proceed as follows.—

Hast thou ever indulged in any imm
tion?

If so, state whether thou wert the pe
menced it? or if thou hast joined with

Hast thou ever listened to any such
avoid all occasions of hearing any, and
listen to such matters?

Hast thou been curious on improper
asked questions respecting them?

Hast thou ever communicated to ano
ledge thou hadst of that description?
circumstances; for it is a fearful thin
mind of another.

Hast thou ever repeated anything th
of a like nature, to any one whatever?

Hast thou ever read any improper bo
way associated with persons likely to
things?

Hast thou ever, except for a work o

to any place where thou wert likely to hear such things?

Hast thou ever repeated any thing against the fair fame of another?

Hast thou been ready to suspect others of impropriety, thereby revealing the rather a taint in thine own mind?

Hast thou ever had any impure thoughts? hast thou failed to struggle against them with all thy might, and with prayer and fasting?

Hast thou failed at all times, and in all places, to use thine utmost influence in checking and reproving sins of this nature, whether in thought, word, or deed, when committed by others?

Hast thou permitted thyself to *cherish* a special affection towards any person to whom thou wert not bound, nor promised in marriage, and who may therefore become the wife or husband of another, and hast thou allowed thyself much intimacy with them? openly or secretly?

Hast thou vehemently desired any such connection without reference to any individual, but from worldly motives?

Hast thou thought and talked much, of marriage, and of earthly love; thus leading thine own soul, as well as that of others, to take little heed of the command, "Set your affections on things above," which teacheth us the more excellent way?

Hast thou encouraged any other in giving themselves up to these thoughts and desires of earth, by even listening to their conversation on such subjects?

Hast thou ever prevented any one, from devoting themselves to a single life for the kingdom of heaven's sake? or ridiculed and blamed such a course?

Examine thyself further generally, whether thou hast ever offended against modesty and perfect purity, in any way whatever—whether in thy dress? thy behaviour? thy thoughts? or words? the songs thou hast sung? the pictures thou hast painted or looked at? or by making a jest on improper subjects, and laughing at any such?

Hast thou ever sinned by sensuality of any kind whatever? or by

Gluttony? desiring or seeking dainty food?

Refusing or complaining of any which was wholesome though plain?

Hast thou ever spent money for the gratification of thine appetite?

Hast thou retained any dainty for thyself which thou mightest have given to, or shared with another?

Hast thou thought and spoken of eating as a mere gratification?

Hast thou been in any way guilty of intemperance, especially drunkenness, with all its train of attendant sins? or hast thou, without falling into so great a sin, eaten and drunk more than was necessary for thy health?

Hast thou indulged in too much sleep? especially lying in bed in the morning?

Hast thou, on the other hand, by keeping late hours at night, for any purposes but those of devotion,

charity, or duty, unfitted thyself for thy religious duties in the morning?

Hast thou indulged in a love of luxury, and spent money in procuring for thyself, not only such things as minister to the appetite, and to bodily ease and comfort, but those which gratify the eye? the ear? the mind? and especially,

The pride of life?

Hast thou indulged in ostentation and display, and endeavoured to surround thyself with all that might gratify thy vanity before the eyes of men? such as rich furniture? carriages? servants? and such like?

If those things were thine unavoidably, hast thou taken pride and pleasure in them?

Hast thou indulged in worldliness, seeking the connection or society of persons of rank, wealth, or celebrity? and being vain of any such?

Hast thou ever neglected any spiritual advantage for the sake of these things?

Hast thou ever led any other to seek for, or to value them?

Test thyself on these points according to thy position in life.

Examine thyself next as to the sin of vanity in its manifold shapes, taking them one by one—first, as to personal appearance.

Hast thou been vain of it? or thought much of it?

Hast thou in any way sought the praise of men for it?

Hast thou endeavoured by any means to attract

notice and admiration, especially that of the opposite sex?

Hast thou looked, acted, and spoken artificially for this purpose, when apparently unconscious of personal advantages?

Hast thou adorned thyself with this purpose, forgetting that thou shouldest seek only to be adorned for the eyes of thy Blessed LORD, with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit?

Hast thou spent more time than was absolutely necessary in the care of thy person—in dressing and such like?

Hast thou displayed thy person to win admiration?

Hast thou repeated what has been said in praise of it, or spoken of it thyself?

Hast thou sought to be more admired for thy looks than others, and taken any means to attain that end?

Hast thou loved to look at thyself and spent much time in doing so?

Has this species of vanity led thee to dissipation, and to waste thy time in scenes of amusement?

Whether or not thou hast been vain of personal appearance, hast thou been so of dress?

Hast thou thought or spoken more of it than was positively needful, in order to provide thyself with plain and modest apparel?

Hast thou procured gay or expensive clothing for thyself, or desired it if thou couldest not obtain it?

Hast thou worn mere ornaments for no purpose but that of show, and spent thy money on them?

Hast thou sought to attract notice by thy dress?

Hast thou ever thought of thy dress in connection with a religious duty of any kind—or thought of it in Church?

Hast thou dressed beyond thy means or proper station?

Hast thou ever encouraged others, in any of these sins or failed to check them?

Hast thou been vain of thy accomplishments?

Learning? or,

Talents? in any way whatever?

Hast thou displayed them and spoken of them? or,

Repeated compliments paid thee concerning them?

Hast thou sought to acquire them only to win praise of men, and used them for that purpose, and not for the glory of GOD?

Hast thou spent money on them with that view?

Hast thou sought to exalt thyself over others and to show thy superiority over them?

Hast thou been led into any meanness by this feeling, such as refusing to impart instruction to others—that thou mightest alone excel?

Hast thou given up thy time to matters which might win thee admiration, instead of employing it to the glory of GOD?

Hast thou sought and desired to frequent public places, where thou couldest be seen and admired?

Hast thou been vain of the affection of others? and spoken of it? or shown proofs of it? or of the friendship of others? especially of persons of rank or celebrity?

Hast thou triumphed over others, f other advantages?

If thou hast executed any work, li wise, hast thou been vain of it? hast th and told what has been said in praise of

Hast thou ever repeated any acts, w thine own, with a view to win praise fo

Hast thou ever told any of thy good works of charity?

Hast thou ever done them to be seen

If thou hast not absolutely done them hast thou been glad that they shoul known, and taken means thereunto?

Hast thou been vain of thy goodne whatever, and taken means to let it be

Hast thou been vain of thy *humilit* very common snare.

Vain of thy *repentance?* seeking to in tears and sorrow?

Vain of thy religion and devotion in soever?

Hast thou been pleased that others s careful attendance on religious duty— behaviour—hear thy words of self-deprec ings after holiness, and been vain of t lest thou shouldest be lost?

Hast thou been vain of thy influen especially if by GOD's mercy thou hast to use it for His glory?

Hast thou been vain of any position o been presuming in it?

Hast thou been vain of thy strong feelings and displayed them when thou mightest have controlled them? or vain of thy—

Good sense?

Prudence?

Courage? or any other good quality?

Hast thou been vain of thy *daring wickedness*, past or present?

Hast thou been vain of any change which GOD'S grace may have effected in thee?

Hast thou in any other way which thou canst recollect, sought, desired, or delighted in the praise of men?

Hast thou spoken of thyself without necessity?

Hast thou mortified others by the display of any thing, which gave cause of vanity in thyself?

Hast thou secretly had vain thoughts of thyself, concerning any thing whatsoever?

Hast thou thought thyself better than others?

Hast thou permitted thyself to indulge in day-dreams, of which the basis is ever self-seeking vanity?

Hast thou indulged in self-love in any form whatever?

Hast thou been tenacious of thine own dignity and the respect thou deemest due to thyself, and so forgotten the words of our LORD when He bade us ever take the lowest room?

Hast thou failed at all times and in all places to cultivate a practical humility, never desiring or exacting, even the deference which thy station might command? claiming nothing for thyself, but ever in honour preferring others before thee?

Hast thou not striven after the lowliness of the poor in spirit? and resented neglect, or insolence, or aught that might humble thee?

On the other hand, hast thou taken pleasure in the respect paid thee? especially if thou hast been preferred before others, and spoken of it with vanity?

Hast thou been prone to take offence and cherished resentment for any slight?

Hast thou not been forbearing and gentle with others, however much they may have provoked thee?

Hast thou been hurt and angry at preference shown to others?

Hast thou ever neglected any duty, or any work of charity thou mightest have performed, even the most menial, because thou hast deemed it beneath thy dignity?

Hast thou ever abstained from any such, from a feeling of false shame?

Hast thou ever shrunk from the reproach of CHRIST?

Examine thyself next as to pride, which is a sin distinct from vanity or self-love.

Hast thou ever treated any person whatsoever with haughtiness or contempt? Hast thou ever despised any one?

Hast thou insisted on having at all times, all the appliances of thy station in life?

Hast thou taken pride in thy family? thy children? thine ancestry? thy relations of rank or high station?

Hast thou spoken of these things, and caused them to be known and remarked?

Hast thou been proud of thy possessions, or of thy *position*?

Hast thou been too proud to ask pardon of any whom thou hast offended?

Hast thou neglected relations or friends of low rank?

Hast thou made no effort to correct thy pride?

Hast thou been the rather proud of it, and gloried in it, as if it were other than a grievous sin?

Examine thyself next as to indolence, bodily and mental.

Hast thou ever permitted thyself more ease than was absolutely *essential* for thy health?

Hast thou neglected any duty from indolence? or failed to seek out some means of serving GOD, from the same reason?

Hast thou not chosen to incur pain or fatigue for works of duty and charity?

Hast thou failed in any way to assist others, especially the poor, in order to preserve thy bodily ease?

Hast thou permitted ill-health or weakness to be, more than was absolutely necessary, an excuse for inaction?

Hast thou ever permitted others to do for thee, what thou couldest do for thyself?

In sickness or weakness hast thou given trouble, and been fretful or impatient, making no effort to exert thyself?

Hast thou when in health avoided exertion?

Hast thou been slow or apathetic in thy duties?

Hast thou disliked giving thyself trouble, and avoided it?

Hast thou been mentally without energy, not striving to occupy thyself profitably and actively?

Hast thou indulged in light reading, beyond what may have been allowable as a relaxation from toil, when the working hours were over?

Hast thou permitted thyself, either mentally or bodily, more relaxation than was absolutely essential?

Hast thou in any way neglected the interests of thy soul from indolence?

Hast thou failed from this cause to acquire religious knowledge, or generally to cultivate thy mental powers?

Hast thou from indolence broken thy resolutions? and failed to execute any schemes for the good of others, or of thine own soul?

Hast thou been indolent in study, or in the fulfilment of any engagement, or in any thing whereby thou mightest afford relief and comfort to others? or give them pleasure?

Closely allied to indolence is self-indulgence.

Hast thou failed to set before thyself true self-denial as the very way of the Cross, and the needful discipline of the soul?

Hast thou indulged thyself in overweening affections, in unnecessary luxury or amusement?

Hast thou indulged thy tongue in gossiping on the affairs of others? in curiosity? and inquisitiveness of any kind? in useless words? in frivolous conversations? in much jesting? or in wit, springing from vanity and the desire of admiration? in sarcasm doubting or contradicting others? or in any sor rudeness?

Hast thou indulged thy *feelings?* examine

y rigidly on this point, for it is one on which persons much unconsciously, especially with regard to relius feelings. Examine thyself whether thou hast en *pleasure* in speaking of them even to thy spiritual de, and probe thy conscience till thou discover wher sometimes thy desire for his help or guidance, hath been in truth an indulgence of thy longing for symhy and compassion ?

Hast thou ever given any token of thy religious feels which thou couldest have avoided—by tears, sighs, ks, agitation or otherwise ? and hast thou ever ken of them to any one unless it were absolutely essary for thy soul's health ?

Hast thou ever indulged in inordinate grief? or in idity which thou couldest have overcome ? or in mplaining and moaning when in pain, or in murmurunder suffering or inconvenience ?

Examine thyself next as to selfishness. This is a which generally pervades in a greater or less degree whole life, and that in so many different forms, t the details of it must, in a great measure, be left the individual conscience. Strive then to recall all most glaring instances, in which thou hast preferred ne own interest, pleasure, or comfort, to that of ers. Thou must endeavour to sift thy conscience this question in all its degrees, from the weighty mat- when haply it was thine own entire happiness, or that nother, which was weighed in the balance, down to se little acts of egotism occurring every day, when u hast perhaps kept the book or the comfortable place

thou knewest was desired by another. Ask thyself afterwards more particularly,

Hast thou ever selfishly tampered with the affections of any one?

Hast thou slighted a proffered friendship, or met it with unkindness?

Hast thou been inconsiderate of the feelings of others, seeking only thine own gratification?

Hast thou excused thyself, at another's expense?

Hast thou in any way failed to give up thy pleasure to that of others?

Hast thou been selfish concerning religious privileges, when the worthiness of the objects of thy desire, blinded thee to the sin of *egotistically* seeking them, if by so doing thou hast prevented others from sharing them. Cases will easily suggest themselves to the conscience, when it would have been after the mind of CHRIST, to have given up some holy service, or even possibly the Blessed Sacrament Itself, in order to take the place of another at home who might have desired to go. There is also sometimes selfishness in claiming the attention of a Priest for our own spiritual wants or feelings, when already he is heavily burdened with the care of many souls. These are the more subtle refinements of selfishness, applying chiefly to persons who are already in some sense watchful; but we would have thee distinctly understand, that thou must first c fully and strictly try thyself as to this sin, in all more ordinary circumstances of life, and in things terial; and afterwards in these its less palpable

hich we have specially noticed because they are apt be overlooked.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

The Eighth Commandment in its primary sense, ight seem to apply but little to those, whose ation in life and education has rendered the sin f theft almost an impossibility, but there are many ther ways, by which the most favoured in this orld's gifts, may grievously transgress this Sacred aw: and here we would desire very earnestly impress upon thee, that the *degree* of sin, is ecessarily measured by the Immaculate Justice of OD, according to the strength, greater or less, of e temptation which precedes it. It were a deep irtue in the starving man whose wife and children re perishing of hunger, to abstain from an easy eft; but in thee, surrounded with all life's neces- aries, where were either the temptation or the erit? Remember then, that in precise propor- on to the greatness of thy blessings and privi- ges, thy guilt is deepened for every breach of the ommandments, from whose responsibility *thou* at ast canst not escape by any plea of ignorance. f therefore thou hast had no share in any of the laring sins first mentioned in this law—remem- er that thine other breaches of it are as culpable thee as the grosser crimes were in another.

Hast thou ever taken any thing whatsoever belonging to another?

If thou hast stolen and repented, hast thou failed to make restitution immediately?

Hast thou ever taken anything from thy parents or relations, fancying that the relationship cancelled the sin?

Hast thou ever stolen dainties to gratify thine appetite?

Hast thou ever borrowed money and not repaid it? or hast thou ever borrowed any other kind of property and not returned it?

Hast thou ever destroyed or injured the property of another, whether lent to thee or not? either by carelessness or otherwise?

Hast thou made debts without a certainty of being able to pay them, and without a fixed purpose so to do?

Hast thou neglected to pay thy debts, or delayed doing so, and thus embarrassed others?

Hast thou been extravagant and lived beyond thy means?

Hast thou defrauded any one of their rights in any way whatever?

Hast thou been forward to go to law for thy rights, thus involving others in expense when thou shouldest rather have remembered those words of the LORD, "He bade thee, if a man take from thee thy coat, give him thy cloak also?

Hast thou given inadequate payment, or none?

for any service rendered thee by persons, who were too poor to dispute with thee?

Hast thou caused persons to work for thee, to the detriment of their health or comfort in any way?

Hast thou ever given false weight or measure? or sold any thing above its value? or exchanged it for that which was more costly?

Hast thou ever knowingly bought anything for a sum under its value?

Hast thou ever destroyed evidence of the claims of others, or concealed them?

Hast thou ever in any way defrauded the Church of GOD, or the poor, of their just claims on thy property? failing to give ever to the utmost of thy power? with self-denial and perseverance?

Hast thou ever robbed others of the comfort or happiness thou mightest have given them? and especially hast thou ever stolen from any one the love and friendship of others? by depreciating them? misrepresenting them? telling their faults? and making thyself to be beloved more than they were by those in whom they trusted?

Hast thou ever in any way been dishonest in word or deed?

Hast thou wasted and destroyed thine own property, of which thou art but a steward for GOD? either from carelessness or wantonness, even in small matters? for instance, destroying thy clothes that thou mightest have some to please thee better, and such like?

Hast thou wasted thy time?

Hast thou neglected opportunities of doing good?

Hast thou failed to cultivate thy mental powers, and all the other talents entrusted thee by GOD?

Hast thou stolen them from Him Who gave them to thee, to use them for the world or thine own ambition?

Hast thou neglected the means and opportunities of instruction?

Hast thou wasted any part of thy life, in idleness and inaction?

Hast thou stolen from GOD the hours destined to devotion, and used them for any other purpose?

NINTH COMMANDMENT.

The Ninth Commandment may chiefly be divided into two great heads—first, every sin which relates to untruth or deceit of any kind whatever—second, to all evil speaking and slander. First, then, as to untruth, it is a part of the very constitution of society, as it exists at present, that this sin in a thousand shifting forms, should penetrate into the life of every one of us, so much so, that many are hardly aware how perpetually they commit it; but thou knowest, that we being in the world, must yet be as those not of it—we are not of the night, nor of darkness, but children of th light and of the day. Let us then not walk still in darkness, but while we have the light, us live as children of the light, and for this er most pure sincerity and truth in all our li

nversation, are absolutely essential. Probe thy nscience then on this point very deeply, till thou tect not only thy more glaring falsehoods, but the subtle variations of this sin, into which it ırce can fail but that thou hast been betrayed. rive first to recollect the actual untruths thou ıyest have spoken, from the earliest dawn of :mory till now, and if it seems to thee that the mber is well nigh too great for detail, then con- is that it is so, and state the more prominent, ring likewise, at least so far as thou canst re- :mber, the nature and extent of the remainder; k thyself then—

Hast thou ever spoken a positive falsehood of any id whatever? if so, how often?

Hast thou ever told an untruth with *malicious* purse?

Hast thou ever made false excuses, especially to hide ault?

Hast thou equivocated so as to convey a false impression? for remember that untruth consists simply making another by *any* means believe that which is t true.

Hast thou exaggerated, or diminished from the truth?

Hast thou in any way *acted* a lie?

Hast thou ever by actions, looks, manner, silence, in any other way conveyed a false impression?

Hast thou ever broken a promise?

Hast thou ever only partially kept thy word?

Hast thou ever given a wrong or unjust promise, which it was not right to keep?

Hast thou betrayed a trust of any kind?

Hast thou ever revealed a secret, read letters or papers not thine own, or pried into the possessions and affairs of others?

Hast thou ever listened to conversations thou wert not intended to hear?

Hast thou ever told a falsehood in jest, or from courtesy?

Hast thou ever by any means, caused thine actions to seem prompted by motives different from the reality?

Hast thou ever purposely given them a false colouring? especially hast thou appeared to be moved by religious zeal, when it was not indeed thy secret motive? or,

Desirous to promote the interest of others when thou wert seeking thine own? or has thine effort been to hide any meanness in thyself? curiosity, or such like? and hast thou for this purpose asked questions apparently with good reason? or gone where thou couldest see and hear what thou desiredst, and covered thine action by some apparently natural intention?

Hast thou ever joined in any plot or intrigue?

Hast thou ever in any way deceived, or joined others in deceit? ever pretended to be ill? or asleep? or agitated? or afraid, when thou wert not? or influenced by feelings thou couldest not control, when thou mightest have done so?

Hast thou ever positively asserted aught of which thou wert not certain? or let it be supposed thou didst not know, when thou didst, or put a different construction on the actions of others from the truth?

Hast thou ever raised suspicions of another without sure foundation? and even then, at any time except when compelled by the law of charity?

Hast thou ever had concealments from thy spiritual guide, or any with whom thou didst profess to be open and candid?

Hast thou ever withheld the truth on any point, where thou wert supposed to tell it?

Hast thou ever in any way disguised thyself, or represented thyself other than thou art?

Hast thou ever tempted another to sin by untruth?

Hast thou ever made an offering or gift supposed to be all thou hadst, when thou mightest have given more?

The sin of evil speaking is well-nigh as prevalent in general society as that of falsehood, and is in its worst form closely linked to it, for the most aggravated species of this sin is to speak evil of another untruly—nevertheless, even justly, we may not speak ill of any one whatever; for if next to the love of GOD, stands this law that we love our neighbours as ourself—how shall we dare to tell the faults of others, seeing it is certain we should carefully conceal our own; in one case only, could it be permitted to tell the evils of our neighbour's character, and that is, when the law of charity requires it—for instance, if we saw a person deceived by an-

other it were right to show them the truth, or i
persons are about to enter on any contract or
connection, it might be well that we should give
information respecting the character of either, as
conduce to their future well-being—but thy cons
will speedily tell thee, that these are but rare occ
to which, haply, thou mayest never have been c
and that the evil speaking of which thou hast to
thyself springs from no such motive—examine t
therefore first—

Hast thou ever spoken evil *untruly* of any pe
if so, give the details.

Hast thou done so with malicious purpose?

Hast thou ever spoken ill of others with exagge
—omitted any extenuation of the evil—or dimi
the good that might be spoken of them?

Hast thou ever slandered any one or repea
slander?

Hast thou spoken evil of others at all witho
cause, such as we have specified above? on this
try thyself separately whether thou hast spoken of

Spitefully?

Harshly?

Unkindly?

Uncharitably? or,

From jealousy?

From revenge?

From envy? or,

In order to make a favourable comparison with th

Hast thou raised suspicions against another?

Hast thou made invidious remarks concerning them?

Hast thou repeated ill-natured tales of others, or spoken depreciatingly of them?

Hast thou received persons with apparent cordiality and esteem, and afterwards remarked upon them unfavourably?

Hast thou spoken ill of them, to those precisely whose esteem they most desired, or who were in authority over them?

Hast thou spoken ill of them, to gain thine own ends in any way whatsoever?

Hast thou ever attributed wrong motives to any persons, without being certain thou wert correct, and for no just cause?

Hast thou listened to evil spoken of others, when thou couldest have avoided it?

Hast thou inquired into, and sought to know evil in others?

Hast thou by looks and gestures, if not by words, implied any thing disparaging to others?

Hast thou endeavoured to make persons say wrong or foolish things that they might be laughed at or ridiculed?

Hast thou by unreal praise of any one, wilfully caused others to speak ill of them?

Hast thou ever spoken contemptuously of any one?

Hast thou ever insinuated evil of another without directly *saying it?*

TENTH COMMANDMENT.

The Tenth Commandment in its fullest sense, may be said to include every kind of opposition to the Will of GOD for us, every desire that His mode of dealing with us should be other than it is. All repining and discontent therefore, under any circumstances of our life, are a breach of this Holy Law, and it remains for thee, according to the form in which thine existence hath been shaped out—to examine thyself as to the occasions, great or small, when thou hast murmured at thine appointed portion. After thou hast recorded any such as shall start at once to thy memory, try thyself further whether thou hast ever absolutely coveted the possessions of another, and if so, state of what nature they were. The first clause of this commandment, however, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," involves of course a breach likewise of the seventh —as our Blessed LORD hath expressly taught us and it therefore must be examined into separately—under this head try thyself also, whether thou hast ever coveted the betrothed? or the friend? of another, or—

The affection bestowed on them in any way? and if thou hast had any such sinful wishes, ask thyself further:

Hast thou taken any means for their fulfilment? or,

Hast thou not struggled to resist them, by prayer and fasting?

Hast thou coveted the riches of another?

Or without reference to any individual, hast thou wished thyself richer than GOD hath made thee? see if thou hast coveted the house? lands? name? family? position? personal advantages? children?

Talents? comforts? happiness? or even the

Religious privileges of another? or any thing else they may possess?

Hast thou been covetous of any kindness or attention bestowed on them, especially if thou hast imagined that there were any slight to thyself? inquire next whether, if thou hast not coveted these things as the possessions of others, thou hast desired them for thyself, when GOD has not willed to give them to thee?

Hast thou ever openly expressed thy discontent at any of the circumstances of thy life, ordinary or extraordinary?

If thou hast not murmured outwardly, hast thou done so inwardly?

Has thy discontent produced in thee fretfulness, ill-temper, impatience, or depression of spirits, for which haply thou hast sought compassion?

Endeavour to recall the special trials of thy life, and see whether thou hast manifested any repining, impatience, or want of submission, under them, or whether thou hast felt any such internally?

Hast thou ever in any way struggled against the will of GOD, or sought to avert His correction of thee by any other means than that of prayer, that if it be His good pleasure, the Cup might pass from thee—but

that, nevertheless, thou demandest that His will, not thine, should be done?

Hast thou ever resisted the evident call of God, to any duty unpleasant to thee?

Hast thou indulged in visions for thy future, and so without doubt coveted for thyself a different life from that which God hath prepared for thee, besides permitting thyself an indulgence most injurious to thy mind?

When thou hast thus completed the review of thy life, with reference to every one of the Commandments separately, then endeavour at the close of each, to remember whether thou hast ever led or instigated another, to the commission of any one of the sins therein condemned, and also whether thou hast broken any special resolutions to avoid them, for thou knowest that to tempt another to evil is as grievous in the sight of God as thine own sin, and to break any pure resolves for a better life, is nothing less than to resist the grace of the Holy Ghost within thy soul.

And now having given thee what help we might in thy preparation, we will pass on to the actual confession with all its blessed details, which speak to the penitent in so solemn a voice, of mercy and of judgment.

CHAPTER VII.

Of a First Confession.

HEAVY will be thy heart and faint thy spirit, brother or sister in the LORD, when thou shalt first awaken to the light, on the morning of the day, appointed for the solemn confession of thy past offences, against the Majesty of GOD all Pure. The weight of thy deep sins, will seem to lie so crushing on thy soul, that thou wilt scarce be able to believe, that even thy utmost faith in the LORD's sure promise of remission, can ever say unto that mountain load—"Be thou removed and cast into the ocean of GOD's mercy," and that it shall indeed be done! Shame, bitter crushing shame, will meet thee face to face at thine awakening, anticipating as it were the anguish of humiliation which awaits thee with such vivid power, that thou

wilt be fain to hide thine eyes, and feel as if thou couldest never dare to look on GOD's sweet day again. Thou hast been down in the tomb of thine old nature, which was buried with CHRIST in His Death by the Waters of Baptism, and there thou hast been rifling amid these dead men's bones, of which thy LORD spake when He likened some to whited sepulchres; for truly the corrupting sins from which the life and impulse that prompted them is gone, now lying cold and hideous in thy memory, are imaged forth with wonderful truth in that similitude, and whilst thou shrinkest from them, which are still a part of thyself, with such horror as thou wouldest feel for the crumbling relics of the worm and grave, it seems in truth a fearful trial, to open up this mass of all unrighteousness to the searching eye of some just priest.

Yet take courage, thou beloved in the LORD, faint not, neither be thou weary of well-doing. Lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees, remember the words which we have set as a seal upon these pages, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," and doub not thou, that ere that sun whose pure beams th weeping eyes scarce dare to meet, shall have gor down unto his rest—thou shalt have arisen fro that grave and death of sin, at the call of thi

own LORD, Who, foreknowing how thou wouldest be holden of it, hath *wept* for thee in the Tears that fell on Lazarus' tomb! Thou wilt have heard Him command His Priest to "loose thee and let thee go," and straightway at His word the chain of thy sins will have been unloosed, and thou clothed and in thy right mind, wilt even then be sitting at the feet of JESUS, having passed from the agony of that confession, which was nothing less than the crucifixion of thy sins, to a peace so ineffable, so surpassingly sweet, that thy one prayer as thou layest thy happy pardoned head upon His wounded Feet, will only be in these deep words of blessed meaning, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the LORD JESUS!"

Arise then, for this day shall be blessed of thee to all eternity, and calm thyself by using that intense supplication, which will seem to thee in this hour as the very voice of thy heart—"Out of the deep have I cried unto Thee, O LORD. LORD, hear my voice! Oh let Thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint; if Thou, LORD, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, LORD, who may abide it!"

And now we would have thee earnestly concentrate thy whole soul, on the one thought which alone can give thee strength for this sore trial—

hope for the unspeakable pardon thou desirest, and sanctification to thy whole confession—the thought, namely, of thy dying LORD uplifted a Spectacle to men and angels, transfixed, wounded, bleeding, *and for thy sins!*

Hitherto we have counselled thee in all thy preparation, to keep ever before thine eyes the Vision of Judgment, that thou mightest be roused to cleanse thyself even with fiery indignation, against that day when thy soul shall be stripped naked of all fair disguises and cast down, trembling and uncovered in the full blaze of GOD'S all seeing Justice. But now that thy self-scrutiny is over, and that thou hast been tried and accused unsparingly by thine own conscience—this sweet remembrance may come back to thee as if an angel voice had spoken it, that it is not *yet* the Final Hour, when the irrevocable doom can be no more reversed, but still, thanks be to GOD, the day of grace endureth, and now, even now is the time of mercy—therefore, from the awful Judgment Seat to which we sought to bring thee in anticipation, look back unto the Altar of the Cross, where hung the Bleeding Sacrifice once offered for thy sins. Look there—look on Him whom thou hast pierced, not as in the day when all the nations of the earth shall wail because of

... but now when His look, answering thine,

can speak of pardon, as His dying accents spake it, to the sinner who at His side was crucified! Look at Him, that thy heart may in return be pierced, with even an anguish of remorse for the bitter torture, thou hast cost that Spotless One—gaze up into those Closing Eyes, whence the light of mortal life is fading, but *not* the look of all immortal Love, till thy whole soul doth melt within thee, in a longing penitence; and thou shalt ardently desire that brief pain for which thou art preparing, and feel it all too sweet, if only it procure for thee, that pardon which were cheaply purchased with an age of woe—that restoration to these outstretched arms, where is alone our Joy and Life, our Light and Rest!

It is most essential that thou shouldest thus fix thine eyes and heart on Him thy LORD, once Dead and now Alive for evermore, to Whom, through His priest, thy deep confession will be made, and from Whom alone the wonderful forgiveness shall descend, shed in atoning blood from out of His wounded side, for it is nothing less than a sin to dwell ungratefully on the shame of exposure to the mortal eye, on the pain of thy spiritual father's just displeasure, or the sharpness haply of his wise rebuke, instead of giving thyself up to those far deeper thoughts, which should exclude all others,—even the bitter misery of

having incurred the anger of thy tender L
and the unutterable mercy which permits
thus to lay thy burden at His feet, and up
look to Him in hope of pardon! Oh what
it in comparison of this deep blessing, if
whole world knew thy sins, as they shall l
them at the Judgment Day? and what th
all mankind cried out against thee for the
thy Dear LORD forgives? Away then wit
lowering and ungrateful thoughts—be tha
for thine humiliation in the sight of man,
meekly take his anger as the faint reflecti
thy FATHER'S wrath; but suffer not thyse
speculate one moment what the mortal
shall think of thee, if only through his hand
pitying GOD absolve thee!

Be thy watchword for this day, as indeed f
thy life, that of the "Cor in cruce et crux in cc
for thou shalt be right thankful to drive the
into thy heart by thy confession, and so m
way for the sins concealed in it to issue fo
only to the same Cross now, thou dost lift u
whole heart with a longing love and full su
der. Be it unto thee, as though it lay upo
threshold, which thou must pass to meet the
of GOD, laid there for thee to take it up, by Hi
said "If any man will come after Me, let him
up his cross and follow Me." For as thou sta

at that door, thy very soul will haply sink within thee, sick and faint, and thy shaking limbs well nigh refuse to bear thee onward; while the rushing as of many waters will seem to sound upon thine ear, telling out the hateful sins which thou must now reveal; but then is the time to bow thy head in meek submission, to lift up thy cross, and with that sacred burden pass thou to the bar of earthly judgment, so that when the Judgment Eternal shall overtake thee, it may bear thee in safety over the abyss, to the kingdom of the Spotless Lamb.

Kneel down so soon as thou enterest, for kneeling we need scarcely say thou wilt remain throughout the whole solemn service on which thou art to be engaged. Strive to place thyself at once in the presence of thy LORD, who is indeed about to come with His anointed priest, to receive thy confidence with tender pity, and with His pardoning words constrain thee to cry out, with them of old, "Blessed and glorious art Thou for ever, O LORD, Thou Lover of souls, for as Thy majesty is, so is Thy mercy!"

During the brief interval thou mayest have to await thy spiritual father, thou canst not do better than use the fifty-first Psalm—the penitent's best prayer, and any others of the seven especially appointed for penitential seasons.—When at length

the priest approacheth, say thou softly to thyself, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD!" and remember what we have so earnestly enjoined upon thee, that thou cast aside all earthly feelings, and thought of human respect, to consider only that the representative of CHRIST is with thee, and CHRIST Himself beside him in all power, to give his sacerdotal act its perfect efficacy.

The priest will commence his solemn office by kneeling down in prayer for thee, and for himself, and to each supplication do thou answer with sincere "Amen." Then will he rise and seat himself beside thee where thou kneelest, that thou mayest open all thy griefs to him as to a father's pitying heart. And first thou wilt commence by sanctifying thy whole confession, and giving it a right intention, with these words:—

"In the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. Amen.

"I confess to GOD the FATHER Almighty, to His only begotten SON JESUS CHRIST our LORD, to GOD the HOLY GHOST, and to thee, father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault, and I accuse myself . . . . . .

—Here let thy confession follow as thou hast prepared it, and remember it is thy duty to speak so far as thou canst with calm and sobriety, that thou mayest show due reverence, to the invisible Presence of thy LORD. Strive to refrain from agitation, or at least to give no willing indulgence to it. It may be that bitter tears will choke thy voice, and burning shame so swell within thy heart, that it will seem at times, as though thy very lips could not articulate the record of some debasing thought or word, whose memory stings thee to the quick; but when such feelings rise, recal to thyself how fearful it were to hide thy guilt, lift up one earnest secret prayer for help to thine all-tender LORD, and courage will be given thee, in dread of sacrilege and hope of pardon, to continue thy sad revelation to the end.

When thou hast finished all, it will seem most sweet and soothing to thee, to conclude in the deep humble prayer prescribed for the conclusion of thy confession in these words—

"For these and all my past sins, known and unknown, remembered and forgotten, I humbly implore the forgiveness of GOD, and from thee, father, I ask penance, counsel, and absolution; and therefore I beseech GOD the FATHER Almighty, His only begotten SON

JESUS CHRIST our LORD, and GOD the HOLY GHOST, to have mercy upon me—and thee, father, to pray for me."

With that last appeal to the mercy of GOD, and the charity of man, thou closest thy bitter revelation. In it thou askest for "penance, counsel, and absolution," and of these, the two last of course require no explanation; but of the first "penance," we will briefly give thee the interpretation which is according to the mind of the Church in England, who so solemnly enjoins it on her children in the Commination Service. Penance, then, is a punishment for sin, imposed at the discretion of the priest, as the penitent may require, for one of three purposes; first, to testify the sincerity of their repentance; second, to make satisfaction to those persons whom they may have injured, directly or indirectly; thirdly, as a means to help them in overcoming prevailing temptations.

If any such should be imposed on thee, receive it meekly and thankfully; if none, think not that this proves thee in any sort less guilty, but only that such compassionate tenderness is shown to thee, as that which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

To every word uttered by thy spiritual father, in the course of thy confession and at its conclusion, do thou give most earnest heed, with all

humility and deep submission, whether he speak to thee in rebuke, or counsel, or command, and when it remaineth for him only to absolve thee, if he judge thee in a fitting state for such a wondrous mercy, forget not thou the awful power once given him to *retain*, as well as to remit; so that thou mayest receive the unspeakable gift of pardon, with such boundless gratitude as is indeed most due.

And now how shall we guide thee what to feel, when the priest of GOD ariseth,—no more thy judge but only the messenger of mercy, and laying his anointed hands upon thy bowed head, uttereth *for thee* that solemn glorious absolution:—

> "Our LORD JESUS CHRIST who hath left power in His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by His authority committed to me I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. Amen."

"O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" How will it seem to thee, as though kneeling at the foot of the cross, thou didst feel the *very* blood from thine own LORD'S pierced Heart, stream

down upon thy soul, to wash away for ever all that heavy load of sin—and oh! what words can describe the heavenly sweetness of that moment of unutterable rest! What tongue can ever tell of it? Not the tempest-driven mariner, when from storms and beating waves, from cold and gloom and desolation, he is rescued by some friendly hand, and laid to sleep upon a sunlit shore;—not the exile that hath wandered in the wilderness among howling beasts of prey, who suddenly is brought with tender care to a home of love and safety;—not the soldier, who amid the din of war, with garments rolled in blood, hath stood the shock of hating foes, when from the battle field they bear him back, and lay him on the heart that loves him best on earth;—not these! For none of them can know the uttermost riches of that peace, serene as the light of GOD'S own paradise, which floods the penitent soul with its ineffable extasy of rest, when from the shipwreck of the life in sin—the wandering in deserts out of GOD,—the sore struggle with the world, and flesh, and devil, it is uplifted in the very arms of CHRIST Himself, and cradled by Him in His perfect love restored! GOD grant that thou mayest indeed be brought to know and feel this bliss, for we *cannot* tell its wonders to thee.—Then wilt thou see that the messenger of the LORD hath touched thee, as the angel touched S. Peter,

and the chains have fallen from thee, thou art free from the bondage of thy past sin and its penalty; He hath brought thy soul out of prison, and truly like those who in astonished rapture saw the freed apostle at the gate, we will rejoice with thee and be exceeding glad.

Oh! with what trembling thankfulness wilt thou join in the concluding prayers, and hear the final blessing from the lips of him who verily *hath* blessed thee unto all eternity; and when at length he leaves thee alone, to wonder if thy deep serenity—thy strange consciousness of the LORD'S restored presence, be not in truth a foretaste of the very heaven, it will seem to thee for a little time as though thou couldest do nought, but lean thy head on His Beloved Feet in voiceless gratitude and joy. Yet forget not thou in that unspeakable hour, that now is the time when thy requests may fitly be made known unto thy FATHER in the heavens, for how can it be that He shall fail to hear thee in the moment, when thou art so truly sheltered in the very bosom of His spotless SON. Pray then for thyself, as thy restful heart will prompt, that wilful sin may never more pollute the new-washed garment of thy soul, and drive thy returned Master from thee; and when thou hast armed thyself or future strife, strengthen also thy brethren by intercession. Pray for all who have injured thee,

or caused thee suffering on this earth, and for those whom thou hast injured,—for the priest who hath brought thee to this joy, and for all who in deed and prayer have blessed thee,—for all who know not CHRIST, and all thou lovest; and then when all the claims of duty and of love are thus fulfilled, (and now we speak not of counsel, but in supplication,) if thou shouldest find it in thy heart to do an act of deepest charity, we would beseech thee, in that hour also, to breathe one little prayer for mercy on the soul so largely requiring penitence, from whom these pages come to thee, that the Blessed Pardon herein spoken of for others, be not for our dear LORD'S sake withholden altogether, from that far more abundant need.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Frequent Confession.

THE best witness to the Divine appointment of the ordinance of Confession, may really be found in the state of mind which it almost invariably produces in the penitent, and which answers precisely to the description given by S. Paul, of that repentance unto salvation which is not to be repented of, when he says, "For behold this selfsame thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness hath it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge!" Doubtless the Corinthians had to mourn the sin of one of their members only, while the penitent has to weep for all his own; but this does but render the earnest expressions

of the holy apostle, more entirely applicable to the individual case.

Those who unconfessing and uncertain of forgiveness, have been content, even it may be with strong desires after holiness, to drag along their struggling souls still laden with the long past sins that clog their every step, can scarce conceive how intolerable it is to the restored penitent, to find the least stain gathering afresh on the baptismal robes, that have been washed white and clean once more, in the blood of the stricken LAMB.

The least speck of sin which formerly would have passed unnoticed in the cloud of deeper evils, now seems to eat into the very heart, and the only thought of rest as each day's self-examination chronicles some slight return at least of failure or temptation, is in the hope of a renewed confession, and renewed forgiveness; and we have already spoken largely of the wonderful growth in the spiritual life, which this system scarce ever fails to produce, when the soul going from confession to confession, mounts up higher and higher, lightened of sin, guided by counsel, ever more watchful, ever more earnest, till she appears before that bar of Final Judgment, whence there is no more appeal. It remains, therefore, only now to give some brief advice as to the manner in which

this deep privilege is to be used as an habitual practice.

In most cases it were best that the period of renewal should ever be fixed by the spiritual father himself; but forasmuch as confession must be produced only by the weighing of sin upon the soul, it is impossible for the priest at all times to judge of the more or less necessity which the conscience may experience, and as he must ever hold himself bound to receive whosoever willeth to come to him, whilst at the same time he may not compel any so to do, he is scarce in a condition to affix a proper limit; the decision therefore must needs devolve upon the penitent, except he choose to remit it to the priest as a self-denying discipline of his own feelings and inclination.

Now there are two extremes to be avoided in the repetition of confession. The first and *least* likely to arise as a temptation to the penitent, is that after his burden is removed, and pardon given, his love may haply grow cold, and his grasp upon the Cross relax, so that he should gradually find excuses to himself for seeking less and less often, the precious discipline which hath restored him unto CHRIST,—to energy of life, and peace of conscience. We say this is by far the most *rare* temptation by which Satan would seek to mar the holy ordinance, that hath robbed him of many a

soul, and happily it is of such very easy detection, that we may readily guard ourselves against it. Whensoever we perceive in ourselves an unwillingness to return to the tribunal of penitence, or a desire at least to retard the period fixed either by the priest, or ourselves in the more warm desires which spring from the first joy of reconciliation, then we may be assured that the flame of zeal in us is burning low, and our position one of deep though subtle danger. In such a case we may not tarry an hour to fly for refuge, to the very means of grace from which our heart was wandering, and in our speedy confession let us take good heed, that we humble ourselves for our delay as for a grievous sin.

The other temptation to which we are far more liable is that of seeking the privilege of confession with an overweening appetite, so as to make of it a spiritual luxury exceeding our necessity, which is much to be avoided; it is possible for persons so to indulge themselves unduly in this blessing, that they come to have a morbid craving for that deep afterjoy of absolution, and to feel as if they were never at rest excepting when fresh from the absolving hands, without a shade of unforgiven sin to mar their soul's serenity. This is not well, to abide thus ever in the peace ineffable of newly granted pardon, is a state too blissful, too much

akin, we may believe, to that of the spirits of the just, who wait the resurrection, to be suitable for those who hold their warfare yet in the flesh. It is good for us to feel the burden of sin, before we are relieved from it, that we may learn to go softly for a time in the humiliation of conscious stains and of our anticipated confession; and further, if we permitted ourselves to seek release so soon as we felt the least galling from our chain, we might haply come to be less watchful against our sins, in hope of pardon.

But there is a far more subtle temptation lurking in the desire, to overstep the bounds of soberness and moderation in the use of this great privilege of which we have already had occasion to speak generally, as of one specially assailing the souls that are too really earnest and devoted to be moved by grosser snares; it is the peculiar sort of self-seeking, which is ever craving to talk of the religious feelings, and to gain the compassion and sympathy of some holy priest, with his exclusive attention for the time. Great watchfulness and deep probing of the heart are required to detect the working of any such motive as this, but it is essential that we should be forewarned against it, and in order to ensure that its hidden presence influence us not, it were best to petition the spiritual father himself to fix the ordinary pe-

riods when he may think confession likely to promote the soul's health, and then to adhere to these, except when unforeseen circumstances render his immediate help essential.

There is another advantage in thus rendering up the will even on this point, which we have already said might fairly be claimed as the penitent's right, and this is, that it prevents the risk of acting selfishly by the spiritual father himself, whose time it is often inconsiderate and wrong to absorb with matters that will bear delay, at least for a brief space, when, as it almost invariably happens with priests of Catholic mind and energy, there are, it may be, many souls, for whom the issues of life and death are hanging on his words.

Be it distinctly understood, however, that these limitations do not in any degree discourage frequent confession, which we have already sufficiently attested, to be in our belief as truly the necessary medicine of the soul, as the blessed Sacrament is its life,—but we deprecate only an *undue* indulgence in this, which like all other blessings may be abused.

CHAPTER IX.

On Holy Reserve.

Too much can scarcely be said on the absolute necessity of a deep and habitual reserve, on matters concerning the soul, for the preservation and sanctification of that Spiritual Life, which must be hid with CHRIST in GOD. This we are convinced is a necessity, wholly irrespective of confession, for all who would live godly in CHRIST JESUS—but without confession we maintain it is absolutely impossible to practise it. It is almost a necessity for a soul, anxious and trembling for its salvation to unburden itself to some one, and if its terrors and doubts have not vent in the legitimate channel where it is invited to open its griefs, it will most assuredly, in some other way relieve itself, where the confidence will be injurious

alike to the revealer and to the hearer. Of the largeness and prevalency of the evil, especially amongst women, of detailing the deep things of the soul *out of confession*, even those who would most avoid that ordinance must bear witness. It is the natural impulse of the soul, and well nigh its most pleasurable indulgence, as we have elsewhere said, and we can scarce enumerate the various ways in which it is prejudicial. It fosters vanity, self-love, and self-seeking—it promotes exaggeration and unreality, both outwardly and inwardly; it destroys, if we may say so with reverence, the sacred confidence between the LORD and His own; it impairs our usefulness to others, kindling our sympathy for ourselves rather than for them; it draws attention to us and blights humility, or renders the outward expression of it but the cloak of self-complacency, whilst in the hearer it most often engenders a desire of imitation which is mistaken for sympathetic religious fervour.

We have elsewhere alluded to the fact, that this evil is rife among all classes of religious opinion, and in none more glaringly than in that large body, whose sympathies are not with the Church whose name they bear, and we repeat that confession is the one only remedy for it—even the unburdening ourselves to him whom CHRIST hath appointed to hear of our sins and of them alone;—B

have already said what we deemed necessary on this point, and it is to the penitent that we now would speak, to the penitent who possessing this unspeakable privilege has no cause whatever for failing in holy reserve, and on whom we would most strongly urge its salutary restraint; for there is strong temptation to persons who love to talk of themselves, to speak much of this very ordinance of confession, and in so doing to cast around it, in their own mind, a sort of poetical halo, very inappropriate to the stern truth of its humiliating necessity, as springing solely from our polluting sin.

On thee then we call, brother or sister in CHRIST, with whom we have walked such solemn steps upon the pathway of the Cross—to make it thy rigorous custom, never to speak of confession at all, even with thy dearest friend, except it be demanded of thee by the law of charity, for the assistance of some other who requires help in attaining to its Blessedness;—this is a case which may often occur, and on these occasions, it is thy duty to say and do all thou canst, to give assistance to thy fellow penitent;—but even then breathe not one syllable concerning thyself and thy *personal* experience in the matter, unless thy spiritual father were expressly to bid thee mention some fact in thy soul's history, which might be of use to others.

These are simple rules, and thou wilt doubtless find them easily kept, as regards the generality of persons, but thou wilt haply think them more difficult in respect to thy spiritual father, towards whom, nevertheless, thou must also for thine own soul's health practise a certain degree of reserve,—not as to *thy sins*, Heaven forbid!—of these we can but say to thee "Cry aloud and spare not," but as to thy *feelings*, ever varying, ever fluctuating, influenced unconsciously to thyself oftentimes by thy physical state, and other external circumstances—and which never can be a true test of thy condition before GOD.

As a general rule, permit not thyself the habit of desiring always to communicate *these* to thy spiritual father, lest a taint of self-indulgence or of vanity creep over the sanctity of thine intercourse with him. It is very probable that he will himself caution thee on this point, so far as he can—but he will shrink in his anxious care from imposing too great a restraint upon thee, because he cannot tell whether the communications thou mightest wish to make to him might not be really important to thy soul. Be thou then a law unto thyself in this matter, and let the rule of thy holy reserve be this so far as possible with thy spiritual father—*speak thou only of the sins that humiliate thee in his sight.*

With thy friends and acquaintances speak thou not at all of thyself, and especially of thy spiritual concerns, except if charity require it—but with *thy Lord* who hath borne His man's heart with Him to His Glory Throne, speak thou without restraint of all thy soul containeth; pour out to Him thy fullest confidence, and show Him all thy tears, tell Him thy sorrows without let or hindrance, thy hopes and fears, thy holy desires, thy longing aspirations, thy self-abhorrence and deep love to GOD. Tell Him all this and *Him alone*, and for thy grief He shall give thee comfort,—for thy hope, fulfilment—for thy terrors, trust;—thy pure desires He will crown—thy loving aspirations meet—thy self-abhorrence bless—thy love with deeper endless Love return!

CHAPTER X.

Of the Fruits of the Ministry of Consolation in Death and in Judgment.

AND now at length we approach the conclusion of our task—a task of which every page has been written under the heavy and depressing conviction, that for the words therein spoken, there are many who will brand us as a destroyer of souls, or at least if they attribute not so much of power to us, they will account of us as having done what in us lay, to hurt with dangerous doctrine the brethren whom CHRIST hath given us in His Church.

Well do we know, that there is haply no tenet of the Holy Catholic faith, against which many, not of the world only, but of the most truly conscientious and sincere, are so open mouthed, as that of the remission of sins by absolution after private confession—and heavily does the accusa-

tion fall, on the writers who dare to witness for its truth. We speak not of this, in order to defend ourselves, it is of no moment save to the souls that must give account, whether as individuals we are indeed guilty of so fearful a crime as that of injuring those for whom CHRIST died—or whether every word here and elsewhere written in favour of this ordinance, hath only been prompted by that longing love to our brethren, which makes us ardently desire, to draw them one and all, to that Fountain of Sweet Waters, where we know that they may slake their thirst and find deep healing to their souls. All this matters not—if the doctrine be of GOD we all know that it will stand though the whole world rose in arms against it—and if it be not, who amongst us would desire aught for it, but that it should perish speedily and utterly?

But brethren beloved in the LORD, let us leave in thought for a little time, this outer world with its clamours, its prejudices, its party spirit, and above all, its human respect and pride, which make us when under its influence unfit to judge of aught, either in doctrine or in practice that brings humiliation with it.

Let us leave these present influences and look on to the time sure and certain—the time that hasteneth and tarrieth not, when for each one of us, alone, unsupported by any human love, by

any mortal care, though treasures of it have been lavished on our life, we lie face to face with death himself and feel his hand of iron tightening on our heart. Already at that dread hour the world and the things of it, will have passed away for ever from our darkened eyes, and our ears will be closed even to the voice we loved the best; already the praise and favour of men we had in life, will seem most bitter, bitter mockery, and it were as nothing to us what the whole creation thought of us, if only the Creator curse us not. In *that* moment, brethren, think, think, were it no consolation to remember that our sins had been remitted unto us in the name of Him who said to the absolvers of His people, that the sins which they remitted on earth should be for ever remitted in the heaven? think you howsoever you cavilled in the pride of life—at these words of the GOD whose awful face you were about to see, that they would have no truth, no meaning in the brief death hour?—think of it, think of it now while it is called to-day, and probe to the quick the veiled deceiving heart, till you discover if no lurking pride or self-love, be not at the root of all this seemingly righteous opposition, to that which CHRIST hath ordered for our great and endless benefit.

Again passing on from that dark hour to one more fearful still; let us turn to look upon a

scene of which no words of ours must dare attempt to speak descriptively. Only in dwelling on it may we talk of that which we shall shortly see, and which inspired words have shown us in the vision of the things to come,—even the Great White Throne, with heaven and earth fleeing away from the face of Him who sits thereon, prepared to try the quick and dead; the accuser of the brethren ready to denounce—and sinners, it may be *our very selves*, seeking vainly to hide us in dens and caves of the earth, calling on the mountains to fall on us, and on the hills to cover us from the wrath of GOD and of the Lamb! Brethren, what if in that supreme hour a portion of our condemnation should be in this—that we refused on earth to hear the voice of Him that spake forgiveness, the voice of the Son of Man who gave His power of pardon, to those whom He sent as His FATHER sent Himself? what if we find that in the pride and self-ceiving subtilty of our own hearts, we have but willed to bind our heavy load of sins more firmly on us, that they might go with us unrepented of and unconfessed, unto that bar of fearful judgment? Doubtless many a happy pardoned soul will there be found whose deep true penitence no absolution on this earth has blessed—but we speak now of those to whom the Good Physician hath offered and would have given this pure remedy, and well

may we pray that He avert from them and from all, so terrible an awakening in that day of dreadful Revelations!

As we commenced so we conclude—GOD grant by the LOVE OF CHRIST to all unto whom it is given, to accept or to refuse this blessed Ministry of Consolation, that they may know it,—alike in the brief probation of life, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, only in its one rich attribute of pardoning Love and Mercy.

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